

HARCOURT.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF THE MYSTERIOUS WIFE, &c.



“ Dishonour waits on perfidy. The villain
“ Shou’d blush to think a falsehood: ’Tis the crime
“ Of cowards.”

JOHNSON.

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THE OCEAN



HARCOURT.



CHAP. I.

AN English gentleman of the name of Elton, owing to a declining state of health, had, by the advice of his friends and the Faculty, relinquished a very large concern in the mercantile line, to enable him to spend some time abroad, for the recovery of his health. He had passed the winter at Nice, and was at the time this history commences (the summer of the year 1790) making the tour of Switzerland, by way of completing his cure.

VOL. I.

B

Mr.

Mr. Elton was between sixty and seventy, yet this was the first time he had ever quitted his native isle ; and, notwithstanding his advanced age, he had determined, from the most benevolent motives, to visit Rome before his return. He once meant to have crossed the Col de Tende immediately from Nice, and have pursued his journey from thence to the Papal territories ; but had been strongly dissuaded from taking such a step by the Faculty, who advised him to spend the summer in Switzerland (as the Campagna of Rome was very unwholesome during the warm weather), and to cross the Alps in the autumn ; and as there was great reason in what they urged, he complied with their directions.

This gentleman was not so much renowned for his shining talents as for the excellence of his heart, known probity, and sound integrity ; his liberality was as unbounded as his fortune, yet he had not gone through the world without his share of



of troubles. He had met with a disappointment early in life, and had borne it with becoming fortitude ; and soon after, influenced by his innate goodness, he married a most amiable young widow, by whom, to his great regret, he had no children. She had one son by her former husband ; this youth he had always said should share his fortune with his own children, were he blessed with any, and be his heir if he was disappointed in the first wish of his heart ; but a sort of fatality attending him through life, prevented this young man from reaping the benefit of his worthy father-in-law's intentions in his favour.

At the age of seventeen he lost his mother, when a mistaken pride and impatience of controul, induced him to withdraw himself from Mr. Elton's protection ; and from that period this worthy man had merely been able to obtain very vague accounts of his destiny, which, like his birth, had been peculiarly unfortunate : for having met with

some employment under the Czarina, he fell a sacrifice to the State policy of Russia.

Some years elapsed ere Mr. Elton learned the melancholy news, notwithstanding his anxious enquiries; and to add to the regret he felt for the untimely fate of this child of his adoption, he also learned he had left a son to bewail his loss.

To soften the rigour of this unfortunate orphan's destiny became his next care; he had long since forgiven the father, and now became solicitously anxious to serve the son in any way most likely to be conducive to his future welfare. How far he might be in need of pecuniary assistance the gentleman from whom, upon his return from Russia, he had learned what had befallen Mr. Harcourt (the name of his son-in-law) could not inform him, nor indeed could he give him any intelligence concerning the child, who had not accompanied his father to St. Petersburg; and hitherto all

Mr.

Mr. Elton's enquiries concerning him had proved equally unavailing. He had therefore determined to proceed to Rome, as has been already mentioned, knowing Mr. Harcourt had spent some years there, and that the object of his solicitude was born in that ancient city, where he hoped at least to find some clue to direct him in his future researches.

At Nice he had mentioned this young man, for such he knew he must now be, to all the English residents there, but had derived no satisfaction from their communications ; still he continued to make the same enquiries of every countryman he saw, determined, notwithstanding the little success he had hitherto met with, to persevere in his endeavours to discover what was become of him.

Having made the tour of Switzerland, he was now upon his return to Lausanne, from whence he meant to proceed to Vevay, a

delightful town situated at the extremity of the Lake of Geneva. He had then some thoughts of crossing the water to Evian, a small water-drinking place in Savoy, and proceeding to Geneva, where he meant to spend a couple of months before he crossed the Alps.

He travelled, as he was in no haste, with his own horses; and, out of compassion to the poor beasts, usually alighted at the hills, which afforded him an opportunity of enjoying in perfection the various prospects the romantic country he was traversing afforded.

One fine morning in July he was ascending a steep rugged footpath, which wound round a hill not far from Moudon, and had stopped to take breath, when looking round upon hearing somebody behind him, whom he supposed to be one of his own servants, he met the eyes of a young man rather, as he thought, oddly dressed; but whose interesting countenance

countenance and elegant figure were peculiarly striking.

Mr. Elton hastily stepped on one side to let the stranger pass, without perceiving there was barely room for that purpose with the utmost care; his foot slipped, and he must inevitably have had a very bad fall, if the young man had not almost instantly caught hold of him.

“God bless me!” said the worthy man, as the stranger assisted him to rise, whom he proceeded to thank in French.

The young man convinced him he understood him, though he said, in very good English, he hoped he was not hurt?

“Not at all, thanks to your timely assistance,” replied Mr. Elton, looking at him very anxiously; and after a moment’s pause he rejoined—“Are you an Englishman? for you speak that language very well.”

HARCOURT.

The young man looked confused; a half-suppressed sigh escaped him while he said—

“ Really, Sir, I hardly know to what country I ought to claim an affinity.”

The bare idea of a fellow-creature in distress, for this Mr. Elton guessed the stranger was, from the emotion he betrayed, was sure to excite his compassion; his hand, as usual, slid into his pocket, but fearful of offending, he checked his first impulse, and said—

“ Are you in haste, my young friend? As we are both travelling the same road, I can give you a cast—that is my carriage advancing.—You seem fatigued—have probably walked a good way?”

A small bundle the stranger held in his hand, led Mr. Elton to make this remark.

“ I am very much obliged to you, Sir,” was the answer; “ though I must acknowledge

knowledge I have walked a good way, yet I can't think of availing myself of your polite offer."

"I can't take a denial," rejoined Mr. Elton, "perhaps—" There he paused, fearful of saying any thing that might wound the young man's feelings, and for a few seconds they proceeded slowly and in silence to ascend the hill together; till Elton, anxious to know more about his companion, said, with a smile—"Perhaps you would not like to be taken for an Englishman?"

"Indeed you wrong me, Sir," was the answer; "what man, in any part of the world, would not be proud of being taken for a Briton?—I have certainly some little right to the appellation, though I was never in England; but I am now, owing to some very strange circumstances upon my road thither."

"You speak very good English," rejoined Elton, "though with something of a Scottish accent."

“ Do I, Sir ?” said the young man, rather animated ; “ the Scotch are a brave people, I have been told.”

“ Such is their general character,” replied Elton ; “ but to what part of England are you bound ?”

“ The capital, Sir.”

“ Well, young man,” rejoined Elton, “ a few minutes ago you did me a very essential service, and if you will put it in my power, I will endeavour to repay the obligation.”

“ I was nearly the occasion of your meeting with a very bad accident, Sir,” said the stranger, “ if you deem that an obligation ; though I positively never should have forgiven myself had that proved the result of your wish not to retard my speed. As I before said, by a combination of strange chances I am now upon my road to Great Britain ; though mine might aptly be called a wild goose chase, as it is very uncertain whether I shall meet with the person I am going in search of when I get there ; therefore

fore a recommendation to any friend of your's, Sir, should I meet with a disappointment, might be of essential service to me. But before you favour me so far, it may be necessary you should know a little more about me than you do at present.—Hitherto I have been very much the sport of Fortune; yet, I flatter myself, I have still some kind friends solicitous about my fate, and anxious for my welfare.”

“No doubt,” interrupted Elton, “and I am impatient to know more, that you may add me to the list.”

“You do me honour, Sir,” rejoined the stranger. “In the first place, my name is George Harcourt; and I am going to England to visit a great Turkey merchant, of the name of Elton; though I am positively totally unacquainted with the gentleman, nor do I know (though I have been assured it is the case) why he wishes to see me, or what induces him to interest himself in my behalf.”

He was going on, but upon looking round, perceived Elton fixed motionless a few paces behind. He instantly stepped back, saying in a voice denoting his surprise—

“ Good heavens, Sir, what is the matter ? Pray take hold of my arm ! ”

Elton mechanically did as he desired, and held him very fast, while he contemplated his features in silence for some seconds before he was able to exclaim—

“ What did I hear ?—What was it you said ?—Who are you going to see in England ? ”

“ A Mr. Elton, Sir,” repeated the astonished youth, “ do you know the gentleman ? ”

“ I believe I do,” hastily rejoined Elton ; “ what did you say your name was ? ”

“ George Harcourt, Sir ;—but I have certainly very unintentionally revived some disagreeable reflections.—I am afraid Mr.
Elton

Elton is dead—if so, I am very unfortunate, as I was assured he was one of the best of men.”

“The world is very apt to flatter the favourites of Fortune,” interrupted Elton, who trembled with anxiety while he continued—“Your friend lives, my dear Harcourt, and rejoices more than he can express at having so unexpectedly met with the object of his search!”

“Is it possible,” exclaimed Harcourt, in a tone sufficiently expressive of his joy, “you, Sir, are the Mr. Elton I was going to visit?”

The tears glistened in his eyes while he spoke. Elton opened his arms, saying—

“Welcome a thousand times, my dear Harcourt!—This unexpected meeting more than repays me for all my past anxiety concerning your fate.”

Harcourt, who never stood more in need of a friend, was as much rejoiced as Elton could

could be ; they had met thus opportunely, and as he had never till very lately heard this excellent man's name, it instantly occurred to him, that his unfortunate father had, by some means or other, recommended him to his notice before his decease. This reflection increased his emotion, and put a damp upon his joy.

Elton was therefore the first to recover his speech, and eagerly enquired how he came to meet his dear Harcourt, as he called him, in Switzerland ?

During his question, the servants, who were now, with the carriage, close to them, and who had been silent witnesses of their mutual transports, approached to ask if their master chose to prolong his walk, as they were upon the summit of the hill, and in sight of Moudon, where the old gentleman meant to dine.

“ Then

“ Then we may as well ride into the town,” replied the enraptured old gentleman, making Harcourt precede him into his post-chaise ; and the moment they began to move, he repeated his former question.

“ I have already told you, my dear Sir,” said Harcourt, “ I have long been the sport of Fortune ; and my shabby appearance will, I am sure, cease to astonish you, when I inform you, only three months ago, I was put on shore almost naked, and absolutely penniless, near Smyrna, from on board a ship, of what nation I should be puzzled to tell you : the Master called himself an American, his crew I believe were of different nations, and by profession pirates. For very sinister reasons, I am convinced, I was decoyed on board this vessel, which I never quitted for the space of eighteen months ; during which time I suffered every hardship a set of the most hardened villains under the sun could devise. They seldom went into any port, and never for more than a few days at a time, and upon these occasions I was
always

always confined in a remote part of the ship, with a centinel over me, who had orders to put me to death if I made any noise. At last, having fulfilled their employer's orders concerning me, I presume, which did not extend to making away with me, they landed me as I have already mentioned, and immediately set sail for another port."

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Elton, "is it possible such villains are permitted to exist!—But from whence were you thus forced against your will?"

"From one of the French West-India islands, my dear Sir; and I presume I was left at Smyrna, as a place from whence there was the least likelihood of my ever returning thither. But soon after I landed, before I had discovered what part of the globe I was in, I was carried before the British Consul resident there, who very properly desired me to give an account of myself. The treatment I met with from this gentleman does his country and himself the highest honour:—he took me into his house, fed
4 and

and clothed me; before he allowed me to finish my story; after which he mentioned an enquiry had been set on foot, he believed all over Europe, to discover a person of my name, adding, that he had every reason to believe I was the object of the requisition, but was afraid the gentleman who had taken this trouble, was no more; at all events, he knew he had retired from business: yet advised me to go to England and make myself known to Mr. Elton, if living, or his executors, as he was firmly convinced I should by this means hear of something to my advantage; promising to procure me a passage, and provide me with other necessaries for my voyage."

"I feel myself infinitely obliged to Mr. —, the Consul," hastily exclaimed Elton, "yet surely he was sufficiently acquainted with my circumstances, to have been rather more bountiful in the supplies he seems to have furnished you with for your journey.— I am all impatience to know more."

"I

“ I must entreat, my dear Sir, you will not condemn Mr. —, to whose generosity I feel myself very much indebted. He was at no certainty that I was the Harcourt you seem so generously inclined to serve. I had no vouchers about me for the truth of my story, and it was possible I might have heard of your kind enquiries, and have availed myself of the circumstance to procure a passage to England. Still he did not seem to entertain any of the doubts I mention, though the only people to whom I could refer him, likely to convince him of my veracity, were the present Governor of Martinico, from whence I was forced on board the vessel which left me at Smyrna; some other inhabitants of that island; Mr. Douglas, Principal of the Scotch College at Paris; and some few more people equally acquainted with my name and person. But at such a distance, as he justly observed, it would merely be wasting a great deal of time to apply to any of them; therefore after having
treated

treated me in the kindest manner, I was put on board a ship bound to London; but, owing to some damage she received in a gale of wind, the Captain was obliged to put into Leghorn, where it was found necessary, in order to her undergoing the proper repairs, to unload best part of her cargo. Finding by this means it would be a month or more before she would be able to put to sea again, and that I must lie under fresh obligations to the Captain, which I determined if possible to avoid, I formed the resolution of setting forward on foot, which would afford me an opportunity of taking Paris in my road; where I am convinced, if he still lives, I shall meet with a hearty welcome from that best of men, Principal Douglas.—But to make short of my story, I crossed the Milanese, and from thence proceeded thus far on my journey; and I need not add how excessively happy I am in having thus unexpectedly met with such a friend, so much sooner than I dared to have expected.—But now, my dear

dear Sir, may I enquire how I have been fortunate enough to recommend myself to your notice?—To whose kind representations am I indebted for the trouble you seem to have taken to discover my retreat?—When the Consul first mentioned the enquiry you had set on foot concerning such an insignificant being as myself, I thought my friends at Martinico had interested you in my favour; but soon discovered you have been for some years anxious to hear of my welfare.”

“ I have, indeed, my dear George, and I am more than ever convinced all is for the best; for much as I deplore your recent sufferings, I can't help fancying they greatly accelerated our unexpected meeting; though I shudder when I reflect that the villains, into whose hands you were betrayed, might have deprived me of the pleasure I now enjoy. But this is not satisfying the natural curiosity you express; however, the moment we reach Moudon I will answer all your enquiries: meanwhile depend upon it
you

you need no longer dread the frowns of Fortune."

In a few minutes they drove into the town, and soon after stopped at a very good inn, where having taken some refreshment, and given orders concerning dinner, Mr. Elton, not to keep his young friend in suspense, began as follows.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

“TO make myself clear, my dear George, as your ignorance of my name convinces me you are utterly unacquainted with my family history, I shall enter into a few details concerning myself, and shall therefore begin by telling you that my father was a Turkey merchant, and brought me, his only child, up to succeed him in business. My mother died while I was very young, and at two-and-twenty I lost my father, who left me at the head of one of the first commercial houses in London. A few months before his death, I had, with his consent, paid my addresses to the daughter of a brother merchant ;

chant ; but her family and herself began so soon to talk of settlements, and displayed a degree of avarice so repugnant to my feelings, that I gave up all thoughts of being nearer related to them. I was no sooner my own master than I received the most flattering proposals to induce me to renew my intimacy with the lady in question ; they proved of no avail, though I had once felt a very strong sentiment of preference in her favour : but I was convinced her disposition and mine were so diametrically opposite, that I foresaw little prospect of felicity in such an union ; still I was by no means inclined to listen to several other very advantageous offers, satisfied that I owed them much more to my riches than my merit.—I don't mean to excite disagreeable reflections in your bosom, my dear George, but it is necessary you should know that I lost my father in the course of the memorable year forty-five, Believe me, my dear fellow, I am not one of those who condemn indiscriminately all those whose political opinions do not coincide with
my

my own. Suffice it to say, I was among the number who sincerely rejoiced in the defeat of the rebels at Culloden; yet I can assure you I sincerely pitied those misguided people who supported the Pretender's cause: among the number of whom was your grandfather. My dear fellow, he fell a sacrifice to his zeal.—During the battle some part of your relations found means to escape; and your grandmother, whose family had given the most unequivocal proofs of their loyalty, returned among her own relations with one son—I need not add that he was your father. Your grandfather's property was of course confiscated; but these are details you are most likely already acquainted with.”

“No really, Sir,” replied the attentive Harcourt; “all I know of myself and family is, that my father, through the political errors of his ancestors, was deprived of a very large estate, which induced him to study painting for his support; I also know that he married in Italy, while prosecuting his studies;

twenty. Your father was just turned of four years old. Her melancholy story excited my pity, and her amiable qualities raised my esteem. She bore her early misfortunes with such patient resignation, that I soon determined, as fortune was what I least looked for in a wife, to make her an offer of my hand ; it was accepted, and I never had reason to repent my choice. We were not blessed with any children : your father consequently became our sole care ; for I fancied he was as dear to me as he could be to his mother. He received the first education England afforded ; and it was my intention, as soon as he became of age, to take him into partnership, meaning him to succeed me in business, and to make him my heir ; but great schools sometimes corrupt the best dispositions.—As he grew up he was made acquainted (rather contrary to my advice) with his noble origin, and from that period his mind took a wrong, though perhaps a natural, turn ;—still he never made any objections to the plan I had

in view for him; if he had, I would have endeavoured to oblige him in his own way: but he did not afford me an opportunity, as soon after the death of his mother, and in his eighteenth year, he left England, without deigning to consult me previous to his taking so strange a step. He merely left a short note behind him, in which he informed me he could not submit to the confinement of a counting-house, therefore meant to endeavour to make his fortune in a way more consonant to his inclinations, and less chargeable to me; thanking me, in the most grateful terms, for the care and expence I had bestowed upon his education, and concluded by hoping Dame Fortune would, sooner or later, enable him to convince me how sincerely he felt the obligations I had conferred upon him.—Had he been my own son, I could not have felt more upon the occasion, and my chagrin increased with my inability to discover the route he had taken, or the place of his residence; but after a time I learned he was at Rome among his

father's friends, which made me comparatively happy ; still, as he seemed to have forgotten such a being as myself existed, I did not wish, though ever anxious to hear how he went on, to remind him that he had yet a friend far more interested in his concerns than he seemed to suppose. I next learned he was studying painting with infinite success, and soon after that he had married. I easily guessed, from his having adopted such a profession, he had not met with that support he had certainly every reason to expect from his paternal relations, and have blamed myself very severely for not writing to him at that period, to assure him he would meet with a cordial welcome if he would but return to England : indeed I have hardly forgiven myself for standing upon a mistaken punctilio, since I heard of the melancholy result of his Russian journey, and understood he had left a son I feared but badly provided for ; yet, situated as I then was, my commercial concerns larger than ever, I could not set out in search of you. Though

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I very much wished to have had you brought up under my own eyes, still I was afraid such a proposition might not meet the approbation of those to whom your father had delegated so sacred a charge :—thus I allowed year after year to roll on, till old age stole on a pace, and warned me that I had not an heir.—The Consul, to whom I am indebted for my present happiness, informed you, I think you told me, that my enquiries concerning you commenced some years ago ? I ever hoped you had inherited your father's virtues without his mistaken pride, and trust my most sanguine expectations are realized ; for, believe me, the love I bore your father has long been, in imagination, transferred to his son, whom I have ever looked upon as my heir."

Elton ceased speaking upon seeing Harcourt turn his head another way, to conceal his tears and emotion. He could not more effectually have won the worthy man's esteem, who was now convinced that he pos-

essed a grateful heart, and that was sufficient to ensure his affection. He allowed him time to recover himself, and then taking his hand, said—

“ I did not mean to distress you, my dear boy—I have long wished to have it in my power to convince you of my desire to serve you in every sense of the word. The will I have by me constitutes you my principal heir: this is merely fulfilling a promise, I always considered as sacred, made to your grandmother upon her death-bed, in favour of her son, of whom you are now the representative. As I never thought it was doing any body a very great favour to leave them what one can no longer enjoy, I therefore mean, henceforward, to share my income with you—no thanks I entreat, my dear fellow; I merely do my duty in wishing you to relieve me from *l’embarras des richesses*.”

George

George had taken the old gentleman's hand, which he pressed fervently to his lips, and his eyes glistened with the grateful tears of sensibility, while he endeavoured to express feelings Elton was perfectly capable of appreciating. Desirous to change the subject, he asked—

“ What induced you to visit Martinico, my dear fellow?—Have you heard of the late French Revolution?—Let me see, it occurred during your disagreeable cruize ; I presume, therefore, you have no wish to return thither ;—but, remember, I don't mean to restrain you from following the bent of your inclinations.”

“ I only wish, my dear Sir, to let some very dear friends, I left in that island, know that I am still in the land of the living ; for though I am convinced I was forced away without their concurrence, still I should chuse to know to whom I was indebted for my late voyage before I returned thither ;—

but with your permission, my dear Sir, I will inform you exactly how I was situated, when, so much against my will, I sailed for Smyrna, as it proved in the end. Believe me, I sincerely forgive the villains who took the charge of me, since their rascality has occasioned my meeting with so kind a friend. How little did I expect, much more dare to hope, Fortune had such a blessing in store for me ! But I have certainly met with many friends, else what must have become of me from the moment I lost my much regretted father !”

“ Would to Heaven he had sent you to me when he went to Russia,” exclaimed Elton ; “ but he certainly recommended you to some of his other relations ?”

“ I don’t mean, indeed, Sir, to blame my father ;—young as I was, I know what it cost him to part with me, and I am certain he took every precaution likely to prove conducive to my felicity and well-being during his absence. He entertained the
highest

highest opinion of Mr. Mackenzie, under whose care he left me in preference to his relations; indeed he never, to my remembrance, was in habits of intimacy with any of the latter. Unfortunately he was egregiously deceived in Mr. Mackenzie's character; but you shall form your own judgment of him, for believe me, I will neither "ought extenuate, nor ought set down in malice," and when you have heard my story, you will be better able to draw your own conclusions."

"I long to hear every thing that has befallen you, my child; we will therefore, I think, spend our evening here, and dedicate it to a recapitulation of past events, in which I feel myself so strongly interested."

Harcourt of course made no objection, and immediately after dinner a taylor was sent for, who promised to provide him with a travelling dress by ten o'clock the next morning; linen, &c. Mr. Elton could supply

ply him with for the present : these necessary orders being given, the old gentleman having desired they might not be interrupted, entreated Harcourt to relate every incident he could recollect relative to himself ; but as he was unacquainted with many details necessary to be recapitulated, we shall omit his recital, and commence the story from an earlier period.

CHAP. III.

THE father of young Harcourt, as has been already mentioned, bent his steps towards Rome upon quitting the worthy Elton's roof, in hopes that some of his paternal relations, whom he expected to have found rolling in affluence, would provide for him in a manner suitable to his birth; but soon found, to his bitter disappointment, they barely made shift to exist upon the very small pensions they owed to the Pope's bounty.

Still the same misguided pride, which had induced him to withdraw himself from Mr.

Elton's protection, prevented his writing or returning to solicit his forgiveness and the continuance of his friendship. He could not bear the idea of giving that worthy man room to suppose he could not get forward in life without his assistance; yet to expect support from his relations he found would be very vain, as they unanimously, and not without reason, blamed him for the precipitate step he had taken, and were by no means inclined to spare him any part of their small pittance.

In this perplexity pride gave way to the necessity he was under of speedily adopting some profession that might enable him to get his bread; and having early displayed an uncommon genius for drawing, he had recourse to his pencil upon the present emergency, and with such success, as, in the course of a couple of years, completely to distance all his competitors for fame; his works excited the admiration of real connoisseurs, and he was looked upon as a prodigy.

During

During his studies, which he prosecuted with unremitting ardour, he became acquainted with a North Briton of the name of Mackenzie, who had come to Rome to copy some pictures for an English Nobleman; and though he was near twenty years older than Harcourt, and persuaded himself he was among the first professors of his art Great Britain could boast, he paid the most assiduous court to the British Apelles, the title Harcourt began to be distinguished by.

Mackenzie had been a material sufferer, as well as his young friend, from the Pretender's want of success, as his wife's family had been obliged, like Harcourt's, to abscond; and the confiscation of their effects had totally damped the hopes he once entertained of becoming heir to her father, and a rich uncle, since dead in exile.

For himself, he had remained perfectly neuter during the contest, and even affected

to



to rejoice, though few people more sincerely repined at the Duke of Cumberland's victory.

Harcourt, whose predominant failing made him rather open to flattery, was easily wrought upon by Mackenzie's specious manners, who finding he had several relations still attached to the Pretender, ventured to deplore their joint misfortunes; but he soon found that the young man was by no means attached to the cause his father had lost his life in supporting: he therefore, very skilfully instructed by his wife, changed his battery, and lamented the infatuation which had induced Mr. Harcourt, senior, to hazard his life and fortune in endeavouring to place a narrow-minded bigot upon the throne of Great Britain.

For obvious reasons Harcourt never chose to mention his mother's second marriage; consequently Mackenzie never heard the name of Elton, which Harcourt had borne till

till he left England, not much to his satisfaction after he became acquainted with his family history.

Few people, his wife excepted, were more self-interested than Mackenzie, who had brought his whole family, one son excepted, with him to Rome, out of motives of economy.

Harcourt was sometimes tempted to smile at their own account of their method of performing their journey ; but as he had also experienced the necessity of putting up with many inconveniences, he thought they deserved applause instead of censure. However, as his talents now enabled him to live very genteelly, he readily agreed, at his friend's solicitations, to board with his family, which consisted of three children besides himself and his wife, two girls and a boy ; their eldest son, who was between twelve and thirteen, they had left prosecuting his studies at the Free School of Aberdeen, from whence they meant to remove
him

him to Paris, wishing to qualify him for the office of governor, or travelling tutor, to the sons of some of the British Nobility.

Generous even to profusion, Harcourt paid the most exorbitant demands without murmuring ; though Mrs. Mackenzie never ceased lamenting that she had brought her family so far from home with a view of saving money, protesting Rome was infinitely dearer than London ; in short, she managed so well, and found such plausible excuses for her rapacity, that Harcourt never entertained the least idea they wished to impose upon him, and his time passed very happily in many respects, to what it had done before he became their inmate.

Still he often blamed himself for the precipitate step he had taken ; but enamoured with his art, and finding he bade fair to be at the head of his profession, he determined to remain a few years longer at Rome, at the end of which period he should be able to return

return to England with *eclat*, or lay by his pencil, if his father-in-law wished it, as he had little doubt of being a welcome guest.

He had allotted seven years for the completion of his studies, but at the end of five his friend Mackenzie talked of leaving Italy ; and though Harcourt's company was now generally courted, and his time passed very agreeably, the idea of parting from his friend rather unsettled him : but about this period he became acquainted with two English Noblemen, who were great admirers of his works, and at whose earnest request he accompanied to Florence, to copy some of the famous pictures that gallery affords.

During his residence in that gay city, he was introduced by his two friends to a Scotch Nobleman of the first distinction, who, with his only daughter had resided some time in Italy ; and though it was not the style of painting Harcourt had adopted, still, at this
great

great man's request, he consented to undertake the young lady's portrait; and, willing to resemble the great Apelles in every respect, like himself in love with his fair model; the consequence of which was, as the young lady was of age, they were privately married, and as speedily banished the enraged father's presence.

The Noblemen who had brought Harcourt to Florence, endeavoured to plead in his behalf, but their kindness proved ineffectual; they therefore advised him to return with his fair bride to Rome, and trust the lenient hand of Time to effect a reconciliation between them and the much-offended Peer. Harcourt followed their advice, and determined to remain in Italy for the present.

The Mackenzies were overjoyed at his return, as they hoped to have obtained two boarders in the room of one; and hastened to tell them, that in consequence of some fresh orders Mr. Mackenzie had received,
they

they should probably spend another five years in the Pope's dominions.

Harcourt was happy to hear it, but declined taking up his abode with them, fearful it might not prove agreeable to his wife; and by her desire he kept her rank a profound secret even from these intimate friends.

News does not travel in Italy as it does in England, therefore none of Mr. Harcourt's Roman acquaintance even guessed, much less suspected, his wife, who, had she chosen to avail herself of the privilege, might have added a title to her name.

Notwithstanding the severe disappointment she experienced, Mrs. Mackenzie paid the most assiduous court to the young couple. She held the sovereign sway, and her will was law in her own family; her notion was to give her sons a good education, then they might fight their way in the world;—

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as for her girls, they might marry if they met with husbands who chose to take them without fortunes; if they were not so lucky, they would always have a home while she lived, and what there was to spare when she and their father died. Under the cloak of prudence, she veiled a degree of parsimony, which frequently degenerated into avarice.

No one could turn people's foibles more to advantage than this truly artful woman, who, like Sir Robert Walpole, was convinced self-interest was the general guide of every action; and thought that those who let any favourable opportunity escape of making dupes of the disinterested or generous part of mankind, did not do either themselves or their families justice. Such was the real character of Mrs. Mackenzie.

Her husband was a mere puppet danced upon her wires—"Ainly fit," as she often told him, for she spoke very broad Scotch,
"to

“to daub canvas for the support of his family.”

Mrs. Harcourt seldom or ever left home, and, by way of enlivening her solitude, her husband proposed her taking Mary Mackenzie, the eldest daughter, then about twelve years old, to reside with her; the proposal met her most cordial approbation, and Mrs. Mackenzie with difficulty concealed the joy she felt when Harcourt mentioned his wife's wishes.

Mary was of all her children the one she felt the least affection for; indeed she was the exact reverse of both father and mother: gentleness, benevolence, and humility formed the principal trait of her character, and soon endeared her very much to Mrs. Harcourt, who, in return, she almost idolized.

Mrs. Mackenzie also stood very high in the good graces of Harcourt and his wife, who she prognosticated to her husband, would

would never make a fortune ; they were, both too proud, too profuse, and too squeamish.

“ If ye had but Harcourt’s talents, Mr. Mackenzie, with my management, we might ride in our coach and six in another ten years ; but ye are a poor, plodding, purring soul ; however gang yere gait, mon, ’tis nae yere fault if ye are a fule.”

Sometimes Mackenzie ventured to retort, but more frequently bore these reproaches in fullen silence, truly expressive of his stupidity, as his better half kindly observed upon those occasions.

At the end of ten months Mrs. Harcourt was brought to bed of a son ; this young stranger consoled his fond parents for all their other disappointments. As Mrs. Harcourt’s father continued inexorable, he was christened George Athelwold, and was allowed

allowed by all who saw him to be a remarkably fine child.

Mrs. Mackenzie extolled his beauty to the skies when in the presence of his parents, but told her husband he was like all other puling infants of his age ; when Harcourt and his wife had got as large a family as they had to provide for, they would not find so much to admire in their brats, nor have it in their power to throw away so much money in dress as they did upon their first-born !— But she was determined to have her slice of the pie while it lasted.—However, to her real regret, soon after George had entered his sixth year, Mrs. Harcourt died. She had had three other children, who died during their infancy.

Mary was deeply afflicted, but Harcourt was truly inconsolable. All his friends, the Mackenzies excepted, advised a change of scene ; but every thing was become indifferent

ferent to him except his beloved son, for whom alone he wished to live.

During his first mourning, a Russian Nobleman solicited him, in the name of the Czarina, who had seen, admired, and appreciated his works, to undertake some pictures she wished to have painted under her own inspection.

So flattering a proposal was highly gratifying to his sole failing; yet he by no means liked the idea of leaving his son in the hands of comparatively strangers, and he would occupy too much of his time were he to take him with him. However, he was so politely entreated to accede to the Czarina's wishes, and so repeatedly requested only to name his own terms, that leaving every thing wholly to the great Catharine's generosity, he agreed to set out for St. Petersburg, before he had decided how he should dispose of his son, or whether he should make him the companion of his voyage.

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He then called upon the Mackenzies to inform them of the resolution he had formed. They were thunderstruck at the unexpected news, as they must have left Rome some years before but for Harcourt, who always, having much more 'business than he could do, was profuse in his recommendations of his friend, who thus gained employment as his assistant. The prudent Mrs. Mackenzie therefore thought they were more likely to acquire a fortune there, than they should probably in London or Paris.

As their surprise and mortification had been very visible during Harcourt's communication, the good lady easily attributed their altered countenances to their regret at the bare idea of parting with so dear a friend, and hoped he would leave his sweet boy under her care; promising to watch over his infant years with even more than maternal solicitude.

This, in appearance, kind request was truly pleasing to the undecided Harcourt, who soon arranged his affairs, as he was very anxious to set out, and left Mr. Mackenzie to dispose of his various effects after his departure; as he never meant to fix his abode again at Rome.

Completely the dupe of Mrs. Mackenzie's affected sorrow, though she really, through interested motives, was hurt at the separation, he thought he could not have left his son in a more eligible situation for the present; and determined in his own mind, if he staid more than two years in Russia, to send the little fellow to England for education, having a much higher opinion of British seminaries than those of any other nation.

Mary Mackenzie, who had continued to reside with him since his wife's death, and had at his request assumed the sole management of his son, had every reason to deplore the change she foresaw likely to take place
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in her situation ; yet submitted to the necessity with her accustomed resignation, and mentally promised to do every thing in her power to contribute to her young favourite's happiness and comfort during his father's absence.

Little George now first began to know what sorrow was : he had felt a great deal, considering his tender age, when he lost his mother ; but when he parted from his father, his grief was unbounded ;—and if he had not had the truly amiable Mary to console him, notwithstanding the arrangements he had made, Harcourt would not have left his darling boy in Italy. But he was at an age when grief seldom makes a deep impression upon the mind ; and, in a short time, Mary's kind caresses, and the complaisance of Mrs. Mackenzie, who studied every means to divert him, restored his accustomed vivacity.

CHAP. IV.

BEFORE Harcourt had reached St. Petersburg, Mrs. Mackenzie told her husband, with her wonted complacency, as his *trumpeter* was gone, it was necessary they should leave Rome. Many of their countrymen, friends of her family, were settled at Paris, and thither she chose they should bend their steps, and take up their abode for the present ; as, from his long residence at Rome, and being a stranger, she thought he might get sufficient employment as a portrait painter.

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She wrote to their friend, as she truly styled the generous Harcourt, an account of their, or rather her determination previous to their leaving Rome; hinting, that she had formed the resolution very much upon his son's account, as she had found, by fatal experience, the climate of Italy very enervating for children; besides, his little George would meet with far better masters in Paris, if he wished him to prosecute any studies during his absence: and concluded with the most satisfactory accounts of the child's health and spirits, and an entreaty that he would direct his answer to Paris; where the family soon arrived, and having procured apartments, and settled every necessary domestic arrangement, Mrs. Mackenzie thought it expedient to send her second son, Archibald, to replace his eldest brother at the University of St. Andrew's; as an elderly Scotch Nobleman had engaged the latter to accompany him to Lisbon, in quality of secretary.

Her daughters of course remained at home ; the youngest had ever been her favourite, either from caprice, or out of motives of generosity, as Margaret was remarkably plain, excessively ill-natured, and had all her mother's propensity to satire, without her wit or understanding ; therefore it is possible that Mrs. Mackenzie wished to make her some amends for the mortifications she seemed likely to meet with in her journey through life.

In answer to Mrs. Mackenzie's letter, Harcourt informed her that he was most agreeably situated at Czarisko Zelo, and had every reason to rejoice that he had acceded to the Empress of all the Russias proposals ; and proceeded to entreat, as he presumed she would be in Paris as soon as his letter, that she would place his son under the care of Mr. Douglas, the Principal of the Scotch College in that city ; whose great merit, and universal philanthropy, he had heard very feelingly described by some of his countrymen

men since his arrival in Russia ; and inclosed a letter, in which he strongly recommended his little George to that gentleman's protection.

This request was a strange disappointment to Mrs. Mackenzie, who had already calculated to what her profits would amount during the two years she fully expected the child would continue to board with her family. Could she have framed any plausible excuse for not complying with Harcourt's wishes, she would indubitably not have acceded to them ; but as none presented themselves to her fruitful imagination, in hopes of future benefits she foresaw might arise from her present compliance, she placed her fifth *bairn*, as she styled little George, under Principal Douglas's care.

The name of Harcourt was familiar to the amiable Principal ; his ancestors, like the little fellow's, had been attached to the Pretender's cause.

This fine boy, for such he then was, became doubly dear to him, and he assured his father, in answer to his polite letter, that he was proud of such a pupil.

For near a twelvemonth Mary was allowed to fetch her young favourite to their apartments upon every holiday, and George was sure to meet with the kindest reception from the whole family.

Mrs. Mackenzie of course continued to correspond very regularly with his father; and her letters might truly be deemed panegyrics upon his son, of whose genius and natural parts Principal Douglas entertained the highest opinion; but soon after George had entered his eighth year, Harcourt ceased writing.

For some time the Mackenzies attributed his silence to ill-health, miscarriage of letters, and various other causes; till, at the end of three months of suspense, they received

ceived a letter from an unknown hand, which informed them that Harcourt had been unfortunate enough to incur the displeasure of the Empress, who had first exiled him to Tobolski, and finally condemned him to die, which latter sentence had just been executed ; and as all his effects had been confiscated, it had not been in the writer's power to rescue any of his property for his son, whom, out of friendship for his unfortunate father, he strongly recommended to the protection of the Mackenzies.

This news occasioned a strange revolution in Mrs. Mackenzie's prodigious affection for the unhappy orphan. She had long foreseen that Harcourt's pride and extravagance would, sooner or later, have a fall ; therefore this event was no more than she expected.

The next consideration was, what was to be done with the child ?

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She presumed the Principal would be no more inclined to board and educate him *gratis*, than themselves; for the trifle that they had made of his father's effects would not go far towards the brat's support.— However they determined to consult with the Principal before they came to any resolution.

Poor Mary could only lament the unfortunate death of the father, and the dreary prospect her little favourite had before him; her tears were very unavailing, and merely served to excite her mother's reproaches, who told her that she would not have whined so much for *her* death: she then set out with her lord and master, whose presence was necessary, she thought, upon the occasion.

Principal Douglas, who had been previously apprized of their intended visit, and that they had something of importance to communicate to him, presuming that his little favourite was at all events concerned in
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the business, sent for the child as soon as his visitors were announced.

After the first compliments, without hardly noticing their fifth *bairn*, Mr. Mackenzie presented the Principal with the letter which they had so recently received, who read it with undisguised emotion ; then exclaimed, wiping his eyes—

“ God’s will be done !”

George, already surprised by the alteration in the Mackenzies’ behaviour towards him, stood gazing in silence at the worthy Principal ; at last concluding that something very afflicting occasioned his sorrow, he took his hand, and would have asked, “ What’s the matter ?” but a sort of dread came across him—the question hung upon his lips, and he burst into tears.

The Principal, still more affected, caught him in his arms, exclaiming—

“ Would I were rich for your sake, my sweet boy ! But such innocence and sensibility must always meet with friends ;” looking at the Mackenzies, who perfectly agreed with him.

George now requested an explanation, and asked if his papa was well ?

“ Not in very good health,” the Principal replied ; but desired him not to make himself uneasy, as that would not make his papa better ; telling him to go into his room, where he would soon join him, and inform him of all he knew.

The Principal’s pupils were accustomed to obey at the first word ; George therefore immediately withdrew with streaming eyes, though very unconscious of the extent of his misfortunes.

As soon as he was alone with the Mackenzies, the Principal enquired if they had
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any idea of what Harcourt could have done to deserve so severe a sentence?

“ Nae the slightest,” replied the voluble Mrs. Mackenzie; “ the letter ye have read, Principal, contains aw the information we have received. However, ’tis nae more than I long expected; for Harcourt was as proud as Lucifer, and there were nae bounds to his extravagance.—Weel, weel, præserve me from such *genteel* notions as his were !”

The Principal, without making any comments upon these good-natured remarks, proceeded to enquire into Harcourt’s family history, and if he had any relations likely to take charge of his son.

“ None that I ken, Principal ;—as for his wife, he never chose, for gude reasons, nae doubt, to mention her family ;—so I nae see what the boy has to trust to. There is a trifle of money in Mr. Mackenzie’s hands, arising from the sale of a few things which
Harcourt

Harcourt left at Rome, but nae half enough to be of real service to the *bairn*; so I think we must endeavour, Principal, to get him received upon the foundation of the Free School at Aberdeen for a few years, till we see what he seems fit for."

The Principal overruled this kind proposal, by promising to undertake the care of his education; and to board him *gratis*; adding, that the interest of the small matter in Mr. Mackenzie's hands would probably keep him in clothes.

"With proper frugality," Mrs. Mackenzie replied; and after bestowing the greatest applause upon the worthy Principal's generosity, and professing the greatest wish to serve the *bairn*, only alledging their large family, and very narrow circumstances, rendered it impossible for them to afford him any pecuniary assistance, they took their leave, highly pleased with the Principal's folly, as Mrs. Mackenzie termed his wish
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to serve a helpless orphan, which had exonerated them from so troublesome a charge ; as she decided they would no longer meddle or make between the Principal and young George, as the former was much more able to provide for his future, as well as his present wants than themselves.

Mary was extremely happy when she learned the Principal's kind intentions in favour of her young *protégée* ; but Margaret, like her mother, seemed to exult in the death of the father, and misfortunes of the son.

Mr. Douglas, after the departure of his guests, hastened to his infant charge ; to whom, by degrees and in the most soothing manner, he imparted his father's death, without entering into any further explanation. Still the melancholy intelligence made a very strong impression upon the child's mind, and for a time robbed him of all his gaiety ; but the almost paternal tenderness

derness of the Principal at first alleviated his heartfelt grief, and in the end excited his warmest gratitude, which he had no other means of displaying than by paying the most implicit obedience to all his orders, and by prosecuting his studies with the most unremitting zeal.

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CHAP. V.

DURING the ensuing nine years, little of moment occurred to the son of the unfortunate Harcourt. The Mackenzies now and then, by way of keeping up appearances, gave him an invitation to their apartments; but, except from Mary, his reception was so frigid, so unlike their first treatment of him, that he had much rather have staid away;—still, as it was the Principal's wish that he should not appear to slight them, and as he reflected that his father certainly had formed a very high opinion of them, and they were among his best friends, he thought they were entitled to every mark of
his.

his respect ; though, as he grew up, he began most thoroughly to despise their mercenary principles, which they never took the trouble of concealing from a person, from whom they had so little to expect, and whose approbation they so little coveted.

Soon after he was turned of twelve years old, the excellent Principal introduced him to the Count de St. Mars, then Governor of the Military School at Paris, founded for the education of the sons of the poor Nobility, with whom France at that time abounded.

The Count resembled, in point of disposition, those brave warriors who shared the perils of that once most beloved of their Monarchs, Henry the Fourth—an excellent subject, excellent officer, and excellent man. He listened with attention to Harcourt's short but affecting history, and immediately convinced the Principal how truly he had been interested in his recital, by
desiring

desiring that George might attend all the masters employed to instruct the young men under his care. Thus Harcourt learned to ride, fence, dance, and various other sciences and accomplishments taught in the Military School, particularly tactics, fortification, &c. and what was still more to his advantage, acquired a friend and protector in the Count.

Among his fellow-students at the Scotch College he had many friends; one remarkably so, the second son of a very poor Scotch Baronet, who, like the Mackenzies, thought when he had given his boys a good education, he had done his duty by them; and Charles Creighton was destined to make his fortune in India. A sort of conformity of circumstances increased their regard for each other, and Charles often promised his friend to provide for him very handsomely when he attained the post of Governor-General of India.

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At eighteen, this young man left Paris, and soon after sailed for Calcutta.—Harcourt parted from him with regret, and sincerely wished that he had as fair a prospect as his friend of obtaining, at least, a genteel independency. He was now turned of seventeen, and thought it high time to set about the arduous task that his friend Charles had begun; still he could not start the subject—the Principal was certainly the best judge of the line he was fit for, and he ought to wait with patience till he chose to debate the point with him. He determined beforehand to be absolutely guided by his advice.

As for the Mackenzies, they seemed totally to have forgot that his father had ever existed, and still less to remember that he had left his son under their care. The Principal therefore thought it proper to remind them of that event; but as he only received evasive answers to several questions he put to them concerning his young favourite, he thought it proper that George should

should at least pay them the compliment to ask their advice, before he decided upon his future line of life. He therefore communicated his wishes to the young man ; telling him that, if he had understood Mr. Mackenzie right, a few hundreds was all he had to expect ; therefore he particularly wished to see him eligibly situated, and in a likely way to make his hundreds thousands, before he died : adding, that he had a plan in view for him which he hoped would meet his approbation, as there were many reasons, notwithstanding his father's loyalty, which would prevent him from rising either in the English naval or land service, and as it was neither in his, nor the Count de St. Mars's power to serve him in Great Britain.

“ Before I am more explicit,” he continued, “ the Count, as well as myself, thinks it but right you should at least ask the Mackenzies if they have any intention to endeavour to get you into the English or East India service, or promote your interest
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in any other way? which, were I in their place, I should fancy was my duty. I don't tell you that they are of my way of thinking, however you have a right to ask them the question; and they might feel, or affect to be offended, if they were not consulted, as Mackenzie is in some respects your guardian:—therefore wait upon him this evening, and let me hear the result of your visit as soon as you return; and remember, at all events, while I live, you shall never want a friend.—No thanks, child—I am perfectly acquainted with a heart and disposition of my own forming;—to have given you the education of a gentleman, without meaning to provide for you afterwards in some respects like one, would have been doing you an injury rather than a service, and was never my intention;—I am sure you will do the utmost honour to the Count's and my joint recommendation.”

The entrance of company prevented George from expressing the gratitude he felt,
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and made him retire precipitately to his own room, to revolve the recent conversation in his mind.—He wished the Principal had mentioned what he had in view for him, as he was convinced that the Mackenzies' wish to serve him would not interfere with his plan; for he had long suspected, nay was almost certain, that it was a matter of perfect indifference to all that family, Mary excepted, what became of him.

However in the evening, having dressed for the purpose, he set out to pay them a visit, and found only the family party assembled, which had lately received the addition of Mr. Archibald's, the second son's, company, whom George had not seen since his return to Paris, whither he had repaired in consequence of having been expelled the University, and having neither money nor credit to support him in England.

Mrs. Mackenzie was with difficulty prevailed upon by her husband, and favourite

Margaret, to allow him to take up his abode with them, and formed the maternal resolution, which she strictly adhered to, of making home as disagreeable to him as possible, that he might the sooner turn out into the world, and endeavour to live by his learning, or his wit ;—an excellent judge of mankind in general, she foresaw that Archibald was not likely to shine in any profession, and had long viewed, with an envy bordering on rancour, the superior accomplishments of the destitute Harcourt, whom she accosted upon his entrance, with—

“ Weel, boy, what wind has blown ye hither ?—if ye mean to stop, e’en reach yerfelf a chair.”

Margaret, eager to display her ill-nature, which she misnamed wit, at any body’s expence, exclaimed—

“ La, Mamma, George is so smart that he must be going to a ball—I am sure he don’t

don't mean to favour us with much of his company."

The only way to defeat Margaret's malice was never to notice her—a hint George had received from Mary long since; he therefore took his seat in silence, and then addressed Archibald, whose disgrace he had also learned from the only friend he had in the family, and with whom, as he so seldom visited, he regularly corresponded.

Mrs. Mackenzie, eager to seize the opportunity of venting her spleen against her son, said—

"Weel, George, do ye think Archy looks wiser than when ye last saw him?"

"Mr. Mackenzie is very much altered since I had that advantage, Ma'am," he replied.

"That is nae answering my question, boy; however, if ye have nae made better use of yere time for the last ten years, Principal

Douglas's charity has been very ill bestowed—but that nae concerns me ye ken."

"I was in hopes, Ma'am," replied Harcourt, "that you had taken some interest in my advancement, and must acknowledge that idea induced me to intrude upon your's and Mr. Mackenzie's time this evening;—may I request a few minutes' private audience?"

Without allowing him to conclude his speech, Mrs. Mackenzie exclaimed—

"A private audience, boy!—for what?—pray out with the mighty secret—ye want money, I presume?"

"I am ready to settle with you at any time, young fellow," said Mackenzie.

"No doubt, Sir," resumed George; "but I now came merely to request your advice:—I am now at an age to endeavour to make some use of my time, and to relieve the excellent Principal Douglas from the trouble and expence he has so long been at upon

upon my account ; therefore what profession would you, Sir—would you, Madam—or what line of life would you advise me to pursue ?”

“ We advise ye, boy !” rejoined Mrs. Mackenzie, “ how should we ken what yere fine education has fitted ye for—or what have we to do in the business ?—Principal Douglas prevented our sending ye to the Free School at Aberdeen, where ye would have learned to write and read, which was aw ye wanted to be taught, and we should then have bound ye to some trade ; but since the Principal has made a fine gentleman of ye, ye must look to him for means to support the character.”

Though prepared in some measure for this reception, George nevertheless felt very much hurt to find that he afforded the old woman a subject for ridicule ;—but, determined to comply with the Principal’s wishes, he said—

“ I never before knew, Ma'am, you thought my education an improper one.—Principal Douglas, at all events, meant to do me an essential service ; and the Count de St. Mars's instructions have, he thinks, rendered me fit for either the British Army or Navy.”

“ And ye expect, boy,” once more interrupted Mrs. Mackenzie, “ we are going to exert our credit in yere favour ; but both ye and the Principal are strangely mistaken.—I have nae patience with sitch proud, upstart puppies—but ye are a chip of the old block, boy.”

“ True, my dear,” retorted her husband ; “ but if you wish to go into the service, young fellow—since you came to ask my advice, why, if I was in your place, I would enter into the East India Company's service as a soldier—then you will have an opportunity of displaying your profound knowledge, and of rising by your merit ; for your dab of money won't purchase you a commission, I
promise

promise you—though it matters not to me how you fool it away.”

“ I think George had better turn fortune-hunter at once,” said the benevolent Margaret ; “ set out upon your travels as *Mi Lord Anglois*—who knows what luck you might have.”

“ Or what think you of turning dancing-master, George,” said Archibald.

“ I entreat, Sir, you would at least spare your advice till I request you to favour me with it,” retorted George ; “ I did not come into your father’s house to put up with insults from every branch of his family.”

“ And pray, Sir, who are you, to give yourself such airs ?” said Archibald.

“ Your equal, Sir,” replied George.

“ Ye my son’s equal, ye impudent loon ! —I would have ye to ken that his father can give him a fortune to support him like a gentleman, if he chuses ;—and ye, what was yere beggarly inheritance ?—yere father’s abominable pride, that was aw he had to leave behind him ;—ainly take care ye don’t make

ye exit in the same way he did ;—though he was beheaded, I believe—and if ye don't mend yere manners, ye will come to the gallows."

For some seconds George dared not trust himself to make any reply ; at last he said—

" You may insult me as much as you please, Madam ; but had any man insulted my father's memory to my face, as you have done, his life or mine should have paid the forfeit. The worst, I believe, you or any one can say with justice is, that he fell the victim of a despotic government."

Tears rolled down his cheeks as he concluded ;—the callous Mrs. Mackenzie merely laughed, and said—

" There, my dear, what think ye of that fine speech ?—How fortunate that I am not a man ! What a hero the boy will be
in

in time!—however, I hope he is shedding the tears of repentance.”

George, hurt to think that he had afforded her such a triumph, half rose from his chair to quit the room; but looking at Mackenzie, he said—

“ As you have convinced me, Sir, that I am a most unwelcome intruder, if it suits you to deliver up the trifle of money you have in your hands, I am ready and willing to receive it.”

“ E'en get rid of him at once, my dear,” said Mrs. Mackenzie.

“ With all my heart, my dear;—thank God I am always prepared to answer any just demands—few people are more particular in their accounts; the present summons is certainly very unexpected, but if you will wait a few minutes, I will comply with your request, George; though I hardly know, considering your non-age, whether I can do it with absolute safety to myself.—Peg, fetch

me my large account-book, and pen and ink."

"Aye, aye, my dear, get shut of the worthless loon—let him gang to auld Nick, if he chuses, so long as we are nae troubled with nae more of his company."

The book was soon produced, and Mackenzie, after looking it over, asked George if he chose to have a particular account of every thing that he had received and expended, or whether a general one would satisfy him?

"Perfectly, Sir," replied George; "for, believe me, I have a very high opinion of your integrity, notwithstanding your unkind treatment of me."

"I believe my character stands unimpeached, young fellow," replied Mackenzie. "How much do you suppose is coming to you?" said he, after having struck the balance.

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" I am no judge, Sir ; nor have I made any calculations upon the strength of my expectations."

" There then, young man, look at that. —I flatter myself that I have been a faithful steward."

Harcourt bowed assent to the conclusion, and took the proffered paper, upon which was written—

" Goods and effects disposed of at Rome, 456l. English ; interest upon ditto for ten years and a half, at four *per cent.* 191l. 10s. ; for board, lodging, travelling expences, clothes, pocket-money, &c. 187l. 1s. 6d. ; balance in hand, 460l. 8s. 6d."

George, having glanced his eyes over it, said—

" I am perfectly satisfied, Sir ; and must acknowledge that it is more than I expected to receive."

“Ye may say that, boy,” exclaimed Mrs. Mackenzie; “if ye had had to deal with some folks, ye would nae have had a baubee.—Mr. Mackenzie and mysel, worthless as ye are, made the most of every thing for ye—so e’en write a proper receipt, and he will give ye a draft upon our banker for the money—then we shall have done with ye. The draft will always be a proof that ye have had the filler, and we can easily prove what we made of the effects.”

“I assure you, Ma’am, I don’t mean to make a second claim. I feel myself very much obliged to both you and Mr. Mackenzie for the trouble you have taken—and——”

“We want none of yere flummery, boy,” interrupted the matron; “yere grand fortune won’t last ye a twelvemonth;—but remember, ye have nothing mair to expect from us—yere last cow has calved.”

During this speech Mackenzie wrote a draft for the money, and desired George to
write

write him a receipt in full of all demands. They soon exchanged the papers, and Mackenzie having consulted his oracle in a whisper, said, assuming an air of importance, and in a pompous tone—

“ There ends our acquaintance, Mr. George Harcourt ; and remember, henceforward, I prohibit your corresponding with any branch of my family,” looking at poor Mary, whose heart was overflowing at her eyes.

Mrs. Mackenzie repeated her husband's injunctions, adding that she should look upon it as a serious breach of duty in any of her children, to keep up any farther connection with Mr. Harcourt.

George, with a degree of pride that had long lain dormant in his bosom, said very coolly—

“ Your late behaviour, Mrs. Mackenzie, rendered your present renunciation of me very useless.—I trust I shall continue to deserve the good opinion of the only friend I ever had in your family ; her past kindness I shall ever remember with gratitude, and only hope that her happiness will equal her deserts.”

Then hastily bowing to the triumphant part of the family, he was hurrying away ; but Mary, rendered bold by the esteem, not to say affection, that she felt for the son of her kind benefactors, advanced towards him, and taking his hand, fervently exclaimed—

“ Heaven protect you, go where you will !”

Tears gushed from her eyes as she concluded ; and she left the room at one door while George hastened out at another, inexpressibly affected by her parting wish.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE Principal was alone when George returned, who hastened into his room, and briefly, but candidly, repeated all that had passed during his recent visit.

The Principal was astonished, and very angry with himself for having exposed his pupil to the low insults of such unfeeling mortals; he wiped his eyes several times during George's recital, and at last said—

“ Endeavour to forget such fordid, and I don't scruple to say it, unprincipled people exist. We can't dispute Mr. Mackenzie's accounts

accounts—and I hope, for his own sake, that they are what he could produce in a court of justice, were it required ; though I am often inclined to fear that avaricious people are seldom strictly honest. But admitting Mr. Mackenzie to have done you justice in respect to money matters, every other part of his conduct towards you is deserving of the severest censure :—he ought to have strained every nerve to serve you ; for your father was indeed their friend, nay for many years, by Miss Mackenzie's account, the support of their family.—She alone seems to have been sensible of the obligation ; and though I must request that you would cease corresponding with her, you may depend upon it that I will let her know how you go on ; because I know it will afford her infinite satisfaction.—I have already told you that I can and will provide for you, so make yourself easy respecting the future.”

Thus they parted for the evening, after George had given the Principal the draft
he

he had received, who in consequence told him that he had now superseded Mr. Mackenzie in his office of guardian, and hoped to act rather more up to the title than that gentleman had done.

Next morning he was summoned once more to attend the Principal, with whom he found his other kind friend the Count de St. Mars, who, after a little general discourse, told Harcourt, his nephew the Marquis de Fierval was appointed Governor of Martinico; and as the choice of his private Secretary was left to himself, he (the Count) thought, if George approved of such an office, he had interest enough with the Marquis to secure it for him.

George neither knew how, nor in what terms to express his gratitude for an offer which far exceeded his most sanguine hopes. The Count would not allow him to expatiate upon what George so justly termed his kindness; but told him that he looked upon the
affair

affair as concluded, and should that evening introduce him to the Marquis and Marchioness under his new title. He then proceeded to mention his salary, and other necessary *et ceteras* ; and concluded by assuring him that he would ever be treated, in the Marquis's family, with that respect due to his birth.

Elated with his brilliant prospects, yet truly sensible of the Count de St. Mars's generous wish to serve him, George could hardly fail of making a favourable impression upon Monsieur and Madame de Fierval.—His figure was elegant, his countenance particularly animated and pleasing, good-nature dimpled round his fine formed mouth, and in his piercing hazel eyes you might read every thought of his heart ; his hair a glossy brown, added considerable beauty from its quantity and luxuriant ringlets, (never having been dressed) to a face and form that hardly wanted such an addition to stand unrivalled among Nature's fairest works ;
his

his heart was the residence of truth and honour; his mind had been early formed by adversity, and his understanding by the strict attention he had paid to his studies, and to the worthy Principal's excellent lessons and precepts. Indeed few young men of his age, for he had not yet entered his eighteenth year, were so truly accomplished in the most extensive sense of the word.

The Marquis was perfectly capable of appreciating his merit, and truly happy to think that his uncle had ensured him so agreeable a companion.

Madame de Fierval frankly told him that he was a very handsome fellow, and would indubitably turn the heads of all the Martinico belles, but that he must part with his fine curls, becoming as they were; in short she rallied him with so much drollery, that they were intimate friends before he took his leave.

The

The Principal sincerely participated in his pupil's happiness, and took upon himself to give every necessary order for clothes, &c. against his approaching departure. The Count de St. Mars presented him with a very elegant sword, and a handsome gold repeating watch : in short, between his and the Principal's generosity, Harcourt found himself provided for in every respect without expending a shilling of his own ; and at the end of three weeks he set out for Nantes with his new patron, and soon after embarked with a fair wind for Martinico.

The Principal had told him that he should no further answer any enquiries the Mackenzies might be inclined to make about him, than by saying that he was gone in the same capacity as their eldest son, to a French Nobleman ; which he knew would both wound their pride, and prove a great mortification, as he now began to form a very bad opinion of the whole family, Mary still excepted, and to fancy that they had their

own

own private reasons for wishing Harcourt might adopt some obscure line of life, which would effectually prevent him from calling them to a future account, or making himself known to any of his father's relations, admitting any still existed who were inclined to serve or recognize him; which they had repeatedly, and as he often thought unnecessarily, assured the Principal they did not.

But to return to Harcourt. After a very pleasant voyage he landed with the Governor and his suite at St. Pierre. The Marquis was received with all due honours, and took possession of a magnificent hotel annexed to the distinguished post he held; his household was established upon the most liberal footing, and a succession of *fêtes* among the inhabitants welcomed his arrival.

The late Governor, the Baron de Valcarné, had left a young widow and an only daughter
to

to lament his death ; and Madame de Valcerné continued to reside in the island, at a very elegant castle which she had within ten miles of St. Pierre.

As her father, the former Governor, was, like herself, born in Martinico, and had left her at his death all the immense property he possessed in the West Indies ; this lady was of course one of the first, and soon became the constant visiter at the Governor's hotel.

Madame de Fierval soon grew weary of the incessant *fêtes* she was obliged to partake of, and to regret the more polished and brilliant society of Paris she had quitted.

Madame de Valcerné was of a much more serious disposition ; but she insensibly became the Marchioness's confidential friend, who seriously wondered that so amiable and accomplished a woman should thus waste the prime of her life in a West India island, which

which struck her as being one of the stupidest places in the known world ; and she often expostulated with her upon what she deemed so great an absurdity.

Madame de Valcarné tried to laugh her out of her prejudices, and with some difficulty at length reconciled her to the thoughts of spending at least five years in the West Indies, and to the society St. Pierre afforded.

Harcourt was of all the Governor's parties both at home and abroad, and treated as the Count had assured him he would be, not only with fraternal kindness by the Marquis and his Lady, but with the utmost respect by his household. It may therefore be supposed that he was a total stranger to the *ennui* Madame de Fierval often complained of.

Every packet brought him letters from the Principal, who informed him that he had
never

never heard a word of the Mackenzies ; he therefore rather supposed that they were ignorant of his having quitted Paris, or else curiosity would probably have induced them to enquire where he was gone.

Thus the first twelvemonth passed imperceptibly ; Harcourt's company was as much, or more, sought after than that of the Marquis de Fierval. Madame de Valcarné in particular frequently invited him to her ancient castle : she was very busy settling her late husband's affairs, and he was so able an auxiliary, that he passed every moment he could devote to her service at Valcarné.

This amiable woman was so generally esteemed, nay adored in the island, that Harcourt felt himself peculiarly flattered by the distinguished politeness she always treated him with. Her large fortune enabled her to follow the benevolent bent of her inclinations, and to dispense innumerable blessings among the poor and indigent.

She

She was just turned of thirty, and still remarkably handsome; her late husband was a man of great family, but far from rich; still his pay as a Colonel in the French Army, appointment as Governor of Martinico, besides various pensions, would have supported him in a style suitable to his rank, independent of Madame de Valcerne's fortune, which was settled totally upon herself, not subject to his controul, and it was supposed her annual income amounted to thirty thousand pounds sterling. The Baron's own paternal inheritance he had bequeathed to his daughter, a very fine girl just turned of thirteen.

One evening, having spent the day at Valcerné, Harcourt and the kind mistress of the mansion found themselves *tête-à-tête*, and imperceptibly she drew from him a short narrative of his past life. She had merely learned from the Marquis that his father was a man of family, but reduced in his circumstances through the adherence of his ancestors to the Pretender's cause.

Harcourt was infinitely flattered by the interest she took in his recital; he rather spared the Mackenzies, but she condemned them *in toto*; they were the most mercenary, most unfeeling wretches she had ever heard of.—She then asked if he had any taste for drawing, as his father was so great an artist?

It had frequently been his wish, he replied, to endeavour to emulate his father, as he was particularly partial to his profession, though he had not the vanity to fancy he possessed his inborn genius; however few people had less right to repine than himself; and he concluded by bestowing some very just praises upon Monsieur and Madame de Fierval.

“They certainly do honour to the distinguished post they hold,” rejoined Madame de Valcerné, “and they never gave a greater proof of their discernment than in their choice and treatment of their secretary, or more properly, friend.”

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As it grew late, Harcourt rose to take his leave, and for the same reason, as the nights were dark, was permitted to make his parting bow, but not without a request from Madame that he would take an early opportunity to do her the favour to come and inspect some papers of the Baron's, which she was not lawyer enough to understand.

Madame de Fierval had long suspected that her friend had not seen the handsome Englishman with indifference; and Harcourt had sometimes permitted himself to hope that the indefinable sentiments he felt for Madame de Valcarné, would not, were she acquainted with them, excite her displeasure, or what he far more deprecated, her disdain. At times he construed his feelings into respect for her rank and fortune; at others, into esteem for her numerous virtues; then again the friendship she had ever treated him with, had awakened a similar sentiment in his bosom; for as to love!—no—that was out of the question;—love never existed.

without hope—and he must be mad indeed to give way to such chimeras.

Meanwhile the gay Marchioness rallied him most unmercifully :—if he was gay, he was going to Valcarné, or expected the fair inhabitant of the castle at St. Pierre ; if grave or absent, which was frequently the case, his heart was there ; he was grown the most unsociable being in the world, since he had enlisted himself among the tribe of melancholy lovers ; protested, since he did not seem to possess sufficient courage to recite the doleful tale of his sufferings, at the feet of the peerless divinity who had robbed him of his heart, his vivacity, and even his wits, she dreaded the consequence of his gloomy reflections, and had really prepared herself to expect he would be found some day suspended from one of the venerable trees which shaded the castle of his best beloved, or drowned in one of her fish-ponds.

Harcourt

Harcourt endeavoured to laugh at what he termed her ridiculous notions, and often sought relief from her raillery in the society of the amiable widow, and the gay parties St. Pierre afforded.

The Governor's *fête*, or name-day, had been celebrated with great splendour the first year of their residence at Martinico; but when it came round again, Madame de Fierval declared their *feu-de-joie* should illuminate the whole island.

Madame de Valcarné was now out of mourning, and of course could not object to joining the festive throng. A masked ball, concert, and splendid entertainment, sent all the guests away perfectly satisfied, and unanimous in their praises of the Governor and his gay wife.

Madame de Valcarné and her daughter had promised to spend a few days with the Marchioness, who, the moment that she

learned Harcourt was stirring, sent for him into her *boudoir*. He obeyed the summons, found her alone, and after the first compliments, entreated that she would favour him with her commands.

“Take a seat,” she replied; “you grow strangely ceremonious—but perhaps my summons interrupted one of your favourite reveries;—yet you don’t seem to invoke the assistance of the Gods, or even of common sense.”

“Your Ladyship now soars beyond my comprehension,” replied Harcourt.

“Why you certainly are intolerably, nay incorrigibly dull, young gentleman—I positively blush for you;—though one of the handsomest fellows in the world, you have no vanity, no assurance!—Nay, you need not colour so terribly, I am only quoting Madame de Valcarné’s expressions.”

“And does that lady wish to make me vain, Marchioness, or are you diverting yourself at my expence?”

“She

"She certainly does, and I am so provoked to find that I can't make you so.—I plead guilty to your last question ;—however I am now like yourself, quite *il penseroso* ; and as I really wish to be your friend, and to remove the nervous symptoms you labour under, such as tremors, sighs, absence of mind, want of rest, &c. &c.—I shall, like a skilful physician, come to the point at once, and as you hope or wish to be cured of your disorder, be candid in your answers :—Was you ever in love ?"

"That is certainly coming to the point, Marquise ;—but were I to say yes, you would laugh at my folly—and were I to say no—"

"I should know you fibbed," interrupted the Marchioness ; "so if it is possible for a lover to have any lucid intervals, why do me the favour to lay your hand upon your heart, and give me a satisfactory answer to my very plain question."

"If love can exist without hope, Marquise, I am certainly, as you observe, a lover."

“How laconic!—however, so far you have gratified my curiosity; but I am not yet satisfied.—Is the lady who has reduced you to such a state of despondency, an inhabitant of France?”

“No, upon my honour.”

“Now you grow animated, man—that came from the heart. As you have not been a great traveller, I may now suppose this cruel tigress, for such your despair tempts me to presume her, is an inhabitant of this island;—these rosy cheeks convince me that I have guessed right—I am afraid you are ashamed of your choice.”

“I am far more tempted to wonder at my presumption, Marquise.”

“Why surely you have not disposed of your heart in my favour?”

“Your Ladyship is perfectly right,” rejoined Harcourt, very much piqued; “my folly deserves to be ridiculed.”

“Nay, now you look serious, Harcourt; upon my honour I did not mean to wound your feelings—give me your hand;—I know my

my levity is sometimes intolerable, but I thought you had been pretty well accustomed to it;—but say you forgive me!”

“Can you, Marquise, forgive my silly petulance?” raising the proffered hand to his lips.

“Now we are once more friends, you must allow me to guess again.”

“I will spare your Ladyship that trouble; since I have acknowledged I love, need I add that I have bestowed my heart upon Madame de Valcarné?—Yet, believe me, Marquise, I will never attempt even to excite her pity in my favour—I should despise myself were I capable of endeavouring to avail myself even of your kindness to plead my cause; therefore let me entreat, Marquise, that you will never give your friend reason to suppose she has inspired a passion which it would be madness in her to encourage;—believe me, I am but too sensible of the insurmountable bar Fortune has raised between us.”

“ I am Discretion personified you know, Harcourt ; but before we drop the subject, permit me to enquire whether, supposing your situation with respect to Madame de Valcarné was reversed, you would have thought her want of fortune rendered her unworthy of your affection, or robbed her of any of her charms ?”

“ Oh Heavens, Marquise, what an idea ! Would it were in my power to convince you how I should glory in the disinterestedness of my passion !”

“ And so you fancy,” exclaimed Madame de Valcarné, coming out of an adjoining powdering-closet, from whence she had overheard every thing that had passed, “ you are ten times more generous than I am ?”

Harcourt started up in the utmost confusion, looked first at the Marchioness, who was shouting with laughter, then at Madame de Valcarné ; made an attempt to bow to the latter, while the Marchioness, protesting *la belle passion* had robbed him of his graces

as

as well as his senses, gave him a push towards her friend, who, advancing another step, with a modest grace totally free from affectation, presented her hand to her timid admirer, saying—

“ Take this, my amiable Harcourt, since you seem to think it worthy your acceptance ; my heart you have long possessed, and my fortune never was of so much value in my eyes as at this moment, since it will enable me to repair the wrongs that fickle goddess has done you.”

Harcourt, hardly able to credit the evidence of either his eyes or ears, seized the proffered hand in an ecstasy little short of rapture, and feeling his legs totter under him, was happy to relieve them of their burthen for a moment, by falling at his fair enslaver's feet, and most fervently pressing her passive hand to his lips.

The Marchioness ran out of the room, while her amiable friend raised her lover, saying—

“ I am conscious my behaviour upon this occasion would lower me in some people’s eyes, Mr. Harcourt ; but I am convinced that you possess a far more liberal mind. I guessed and applauded the motives of that reserve, which induced me to come into the Marchioness’s plan to discover the real state of your heart. She has long been in my secret, and has long wished that I would have permitted her to disclose it.—You only wanted encouragement, she has repeatedly assured me ; and believe me, like myself, she ever did you justice. Situated as we both were, you could not disclose your sentiments, she averred—such a step would be inconsistent with your principles ; yet she encouraged me to hope what you have recently acknowledged, and I trust you will forgive our joint deception.”

Harcourt

Harcourt endeavoured to express the various sensations which assailed him ; at such a moment he could not be very eloquent, and Madame de Valcarné felt her regard for him increase during a *tête-à-tête* of two hours, which hardly appeared two minutes, when the Marchioness entered in more than her usual spirits.

“ Now pray, good folks, descend from your heroics, and pay me some of your best compliments upon my superior talents for planning and promoting love matches.”

Harcourt assured her that he was not conversant in any language sufficiently expressive to make her understand what he wished to say ;—and Madame de Valcarné exclaimed, she thought that the Marchioness ought to be very much obliged to them for affording her an opportunity of displaying the surprising talents she prided herself so much upon.

“And not without reason, Baronne; reflect upon the trouble I have add to persuade you both to do the very thing your hearts were set upon: but one was so diffident, and the other so afraid of appearing forward, I thought even your courtship would never have begun; and Heaven knows when Harcourt will summon courage enough to press you to fix the wedding-day.—Let it take place, if possible, during my dancing days?”

Having run on in the same strain for some time, she went in search of her husband, who congratulated his favourite Harcourt, and amiable friend, in the gayest manner upon their mutual felicity; though he protested that he was selfish enough seriously to regret the impending loss of his secretary, whom he should never replace so thoroughly to his satisfaction: and Harcourt, with a politeness that seemed inherent in his nature, assured his kind patron that he would not resign his post till he did meet with some one in whom he could place equal confidence.

CHAP. VII.

IN less than a month every thing was in readiness for the approaching nuptials, and the auspicious day was fixed. The marriage ceremony was to take place at the Castle of Valcerné, which was delightfully situated within a mile of the sea coast.

At the appointed time a large party, invited upon the joyful occasion, having dined and spent a most agreeable day, were preparing to conclude the evening with a ball. The sacred ceremony, according to the established custom in France (among the great) was to take place at midnight.—The Governor,

Governor, however, advised signing the marriage articles previous to their quitting the saloon.

They had been drawn up under Madame de Valcarné's direction, and the Marquis knew that she particularly wished they should be signed, sealed, and delivered in the presence of some of the most respectable inhabitants of the island: his proposition of course met with general approbation; but at the moment the deeds were brought in, a servant addressed Harcourt in a whisper, who instantly rose, and making a hasty apology to the company, left the room.

For near half an hour his absence excited no astonishment; at the expiration of that time Madame de Fierval began to torment her friend, and the rest of the party ventured to express their surprise. Madame de Valcarné was evidently uneasy, and rang the bell; the servant who had brought the message that induced Harcourt at such a moment

moment to leave the company, answered the summons.

The Marquis asked him, who it was that wanted Mr. Harcourt, and where that gentleman was?

The man looked surprised, and said he thought Mr. Harcourt had returned into the saloon:—a gentleman, who looked like a naval Officer, had desired him to call him out, and to tell him that he should not detain him two minutes.

“ Oh then he is in some other room,” rejoined the Marquis; “ so now go, my friend, and tell him from me that I wish to say three words to him.”

The servant soon returned, and informed the Marquis that he had left the castle.

This unexpected news occasioned general consternation; the Marquis endeavoured to

conceal his own astonishment, and tried to calm Madame de Valcarné's fears, by saying that it was certainly somebody wanted him in his official capacity, upon business which could not be delayed.

“ Admitting your conclusions to be just, Marquis,” rejoined the agitated Madame de Valcarné, “ it is very strange that Mr. Harcourt should set out for St. Pierre without letting us know his intentions.”

The Marquis was unable to account for so flagrant a breach of politeness in his favourite, therefore left the room to make farther enquiries before he made any answer; and found several servants in the hall debating the same point.—The Marquis was now minute in his questions, but merely learned that Harcourt had stepped on one side with the stranger, who addressed him in English, and had then followed him to the door without his hat, which led the servants to suppose that he might have walked round
the

the house, and let himself in again by one of the glass-doors, that opened out of the saloon upon the back lawn.

“ Was there any carriage in waiting ? ” enquired the Marquis.

He was answered in the negative. His alarm now became serious, for he could hardly suppose that any man in his senses would have set out on foot, or on horseback for St. Pierre, full dressed and bare-headed. While he was revolving this strange occurrence in his mind, and endeavouring to form some plan likely to relieve Madame de Valcarné’s uneasiness, that lady, unable any longer to attend to etiquette, joined him, with the Marchioness, in the hall ; and in their company he searched every apartment of the castle in vain.

The alarm was now become general ;— Madame de Valcarné was sure that he would be found murdered ! indeed every one began

began to think that a duel was the occasion of his absence. The gentlemen therefore, having procured lights, searched the gardens, adjoining woods, and other environs, while the ladies once more explored the inside of the castle; the gentlemen repeatedly called to the object of their fruitless search, but received no answer, nor could they meet with the slightest trace likely to lead to a discovery of the road he had taken, which every one agreed was truly incomprehensible.

The Marquis ordered every horse to be saddled, and servants to take every different road; while he himself mounted one of the fleetest in Madame de Valcarné's stud, a new purchase made for her beloved Harcourt, and galloped towards St. Pierre. Unable to gain the slightest intelligence, and convinced that he had neither been seen upon the road thither, nor at his hotel, he hastened back, in hopes that some intelligence would have transpired before his return; but
found

found every messenger had been equally unsuccessful, notwithstanding the general alarm now prevailing, and the variety of people engaged in the search.

Among the rest, four fishermen, attracted by the numerous lights and bustle at the castle, and thinking that something extraordinary had happened, came to offer their assistance; they were armed, and out of breath.—The Marquis, who hoped that every stranger would relieve them from their present dreadful suspense, eagerly enquired what news they had brought?

“Why, no news, my Lord,” answered one who took upon himself to be spokesman, “only seeing such a number of lights, and people running backwards and forwards at the castle, which we discovered by our glasses, though we were a mile or more from shore, out a fishing, we thought something was the matter; so we agreed to land, and offer our assistance.—We don’t usually go out
armed,

armed, but there has been a vessel hovering about the coast all the evening, and just at dusk we saw some of the sailors from on board her go on shore, for plunder we supposed, and the bustle and lights made us fear that they had attacked the castle."

This unsatisfactory account, in some measure; elucidated Harcourt's extraordinary departure; yet the fishermen had not seen the sailors return, nor, owing to the darkness of the night, did they know whether the vessel had put to sea or not: nor could they tell what nation she belonged to, only they knew she was not French built.

— This accorded with what the servant had said, that the Officer who sent for Harcourt addressed him in English; and the Marquis declared his suspicions that the unfortunate young man had been spirited or forced on board the vessel, by that Officer and the sailors the fishermen had seen land.

Most

Most of the company were of his opinion ; but a Count du Breuil, who had once been a candidate for Madame de Valcarné's hand, averred it struck him, that Harcourt was in the secret, and had taken this method to escape from the impending ceremony ; he had obeyed the summons without hesitation, and certainly might have procured assistance to repel any force likely to have overpowered him."

The Marchioness could not listen with patience to such false insinuations ; she exclaimed—" Alive or dead, I am convinced Harcourt has fallen into the snare of some designing villains ;" and Madame de Valcarné seemed to have recovered her wonted spirits while she defended her adored and much-regretted lover.

What measures to take to restore him alive to her arms, alone occupied the Marquis, who had merely smiled indignantly at the Count du Breuil's attempt, for it proved

no

no more, to lower him in the esteem of his mistress and friends ; therefore leaving the truly disconsolate Baronne to the care of his wife, he ordered his carriage, and set out once more for St. Pierre ; the rest of the company also took their leave with many expressions of regret, and the Count du Breuil declared he was convinced that he had been too hasty in the erroneous conjectures he had formed, and protested himself ready to set out for any part of Europe in search of the happy Harcourt, whom he must envy, as the idea of possessing the heart of Madame de Valcarné would certainly support him under any sufferings.

The moment the Marquis reached St. Pierre, he enquired what ships had left the harbour that day or the day before ; and the only one likely to excite his suspicions was an American brig, which had lain there a fortnight or more, having been driven in by stress of weather, and had sailed with that afternoon's tide.

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To think of pursuing a vessel bound no one could tell whither, was a very hopeless project; nevertheless, animated by the great rewards the Marquis promised should they prove successful, two Captains sailed in pursuit of the American, and returned, as might have been expected, without having even caught sight of her. Therefore all the Marquis could do was to endeavour to inspire the unfortunate Madame de Valcarné with hopes, which he did not entertain himself, of again seeing her beloved Harcourt; and to write an account of the extraordinary event to Principal Douglas and the Count de St. Mars.

We will, therefore, now return to the much-lamented youth, who was addressed, as has been already mentioned, in the hall by an Englishman, whose first question in his native language was—

“ Is your name Harcourt, Sir ? ”

He

He was answered in the affirmative.

“ Pray, Sir,” the stranger proceeded, “ are you acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Creighton, second son to Sir Alexander Creighton ?”

“ Perfectly, Sir,” warmly interrupted Harcourt, “ what of him ?”

“ He wishes to speak with you, Sir, but can’t stop a moment, or he would have alighted.”

“ Lead the way, Sir,” said the unsuspicious Harcourt ; “ he must come in—where is he ?—when did you arrive at St. Pierre ?”

“ Only a few hours ago, Sir,” he replied ; “ we altered our course on purpose to afford him an opportunity of seeing you.”

“ How kind !” said Harcourt, without reflecting that Creighton did not know where he was, and that there was every reason to suppose that gentleman was in the East Indies ; these ideas never struck him as he
crossed

crossed the court with his companion, but not seeing any carriage, he asked—

“Where is he, Sir?”

“Just at the corner of the wall, Sir,” was the reply; “he would not come within sight of the house.”

As it was very cold, and Harcourt had just left a warm room, he hastened to the spot where he expected to find his friend; but, to his utter consternation, he was instantly surrounded by a party of armed men, whose first words, upon his conductor's calling out, “Jack's alive,” were—

“If you make the least noise, you are a dead man.”

Such a salute, and at such a moment, might have appalled the most undaunted hero unarmed; however, fearful their deluded victim should make resistance, and of the consequences that must naturally ensue,

should he be rescued from their power, they forced a gag into his mouth, tied his hands behind him, then dragged him along by the collar towards the coast, holding a pistol on each side of his head, and swearing that they would send a brace of bullets through his brains, if he did not hasten after their conductor as speedily as when he came towards them.

Thus threatened and surrounded, he had no other choice left him but obedience ; and thus was he hurried along without being allowed time to breathe, till he reached the beach in a state of mind he would have found it impossible to define. Had it been in his power, he would have endeavoured to expostulate with his vile betrayer ; but he was conscious that he had not money enough about him to purchase his liberty, nor dared he hope that they would trust to any promises of future rewards ;—had they merely meant to rob him, they would probably have done it immediately.

However,

However, the moment they were within hailing, his conductor again called out, "Jack's alive," to a boat that lay off at some distance, which was soon run on shore, and Harcourt was desired to step into it. Resistance would now have proved as unavailing as absurd; he therefore did not make them repeat their order, and was followed by his five companions, who pushed the boat off the moment they were in.

This strange behaviour puzzled Harcourt excessively; he had given up all thoughts of matrimony, and only tried to prepare himself for a better world, as he now fully expected they would, after robbing and stripping him, throw him overboard.

In this horrid uncertainty, as to their real intentions, he remained till they reached a vessel that lay off ready to receive them, he was certain by the former watch-word, "Jack's alive," being again repeated.

Harcourt could justly have replied, "George was hardly so;" however he was now, without having his hands untied, dragged up the side of the ship, and a total silence prevailed while the boat was hawled in by the men. The officer who had decoyed Harcourt into his power, then called out—

"Now let us make the best of our way, my lads; there is a delightful breeze."

Harcourt now concluded that this was the Captain, for the moment he spoke, he was obeyed,

"Come, Sir," said he to his prisoner, who was still unable to answer him, "walk below.—Here, Sampson, a light there—and take care this smart Macaroni don't break his neck.—What, I suppose you are in a little better spirits now you find we are not going to send you to *Davy Jones* just yet."

Harcourt

Harcourt made a sort of movement to thank him for his humanity, and descended into a small cabin, the door of which was immediately closed after him, and he left in total darkness.

He found that they were under sail, and endeavoured to compose his mind by reflecting that it was evidently not intended to make away with him, as he had at first expected; blamed himself very severely for having so easily become their dupe, though it was now too late to repine; some bitter enemies, envious of his approaching happiness, had certainly laid this snare for him; Madame de Valcarné's partiality in his favour had met the disapprobation of her friends, or some part of her late husband's family, and they had taken this kind method to separate them, and punish him for his presumption.

For three hours, which seemed as many centuries, did he remain in this uncomfortable

able situation, his hands still tied, and his mouth still gagged ; while the greatest merriment seemed to prevail among the ship's crew, who were rejoicing, as he justly concluded, over their recent success.

At last Sampson, whose strong masculine countenance, pitted with the small-pox, wide mouth, and large eye-brows, indicated the ferocity of his disposition, opened his door, now three parts drunk, and stood with his candle in one hand, and the door in the other, contemplating Harcourt's figure for several seconds before he broke out with—

“ I han't seen a powdered monkey before for this long time !—How are you, Jackoo ? ”

To have given way to anger, Harcourt was well aware would only have increased this fellow's unfeeling triumph ; he was also perfectly sensible that he was totally at his and the Captain's mercy ; and hoping that it would, some time or other, perhaps, be in
his

his power to reward him according to his deserts, he determined at least to endeavour to excite his compassion by his looks.

“ Oh ! Oh ! ” he went on, “ what quite tame !— Well it is a good boy— what would he give, I wonder, to be able to chatter ?— Come, blast your eyes, don’t bite my fingers,” pulling the gag out of his mouth while he spoke.

“ I am very much obliged to you, friend,” said Harcourt, “ and will freely give you all the money and valuables I have about me, and as much more if—— ”

“ None of your jaw, my lad,” vociferated Sampson, turning upon his heel.

“ Hold, Captain,” cried Harcourt, knowing he was not addressing the Commander of the vessel, but wishing to flatter the fellow’s vanity, “ a few words more ! ”

Sampson faced about, saying—

“ What do you want with the Captain ? ”

“ Won’t you be so kind as to untie my hands?—they are very uncomfortable.”

“ D—mn my eyes, I forgot that—come turn round, promise to behave well though.”

“ You shall have no reason to complain of me, my friend.”

“ Oh! you are in the humour to promise any thing now,” rejoined Sampson, having set his hands at liberty.

“ Believe me, I won’t enter into any engagement I have not the power, as well as intention to perform. First let me thank you for this comfortable release, Captain; then permit me to ask you one more favour.”

“ I am not the master of this here ship, d’ye see, though I am your’s for the present—so, as I said before, no more of your jaw.”

“ Well, whoever you are, you have treated me very kindly; and I promise you, if, through your interest, I am permitted to land again upon the island I have quitted, I will make it much more worth the while
of

of every man on board, than to carry me a prisoner to any part of the globe!—Will ten thousand pounds satisfy you, and a solemn assurance that you shall never be called to an account for what you have done?”

“Have you got the money about you?”

“I have not; but I can raise three times that sum in less than an hour, if you will land me in the same place again.”

“What a d——d shallow-brained fellow thou art!” quoth Sampson; “do you suppose, if you had the money about you, that we should wait for your leave to take it; or that we should trust you to go in search of such a sum?—No, no, my lad, it won’t do—so no more of your flummery!—Do you chuse to have any thing to eat?”

“No, I thank you,” replied Harcourt, convinced that it was in vain to hope for liberty even from their avarice, “I am not hungry to-night.”

“Well then, go to bed as soon as you chuse, and sleep till your stomach comes to you, as I mean to do,” clapping to the door,

which he double-locked and barred without side.

Harcourt, once more left to his own reflections, endeavoured to guess to whom he was indebted for his present voyage.—To hear he was no more, would certainly gratify Sampson's, and his Captain's base employers ; he was therefore determined to bear his severe disappointment like a man, and not sink under the first trial of his fortitude ;—his religious, as well as moral principles had been instilled into his youthful mind by Principal Douglas, who ever acted up to what he preached, and had formed a very high, as well as just idea of his pupil's disposition. He now recommended himself to the protection of his Heavenly Father, and felt infinite consolation in the reflection that his mercy was infinite and unbounded, and that even the dreadful reverse of fortune he had experienced, might ultimately prove an advantage to him.

Having thus fortified his mind, he determined to wait the event of his imprisonment with patience and resignation : still he found it impossible to sleep. However, before he had risen from his miserable couch, Sampson again appeared with a sailor's jacket and trowsers, which he desired him to put on, that his best might be saved for Sundays ; which he chose to take into his possession, with all his money, watch, buckles, and every other article of any value that he had about him. To resist would have been of little avail ; and when he attempted to repeat his overnight's promise, he was silenced with a threat to throw him overboard if he did not hold his cursed jaw ; he therefore quietly resigned himself to his fate.

Sampson was far more brutal sober, than when in liquor ; he now brought him something to eat and drink, telling him that he need not to die of hunger except he chose.

Thus confined, and treated with the most unfeeling barbarity, did he linger away eighteen months ; his life became a burthen to him—still he took every means in his power, from motives of religion, to prolong his existence.

Whenever they went into any port, he was chained under the hatches ; and at last, when he least expected it, landed—in the middle of the night near Smyrna, in the same rags that had been given him, bare-footed and bare-headed, and without one farthing in his pocket. It may therefore be supposed with what gratitude he accepted the British Consul's offers ; how truly happy he found himself, notwithstanding his reduced circumstances, as he journied on foot through the delightful plains of Lombardy, and less fertile, but more romantic, Swiss mountains, among which he so unexpectedly met with so excellent a friend.

CHAP. VIII.

WITH rather more brevity in some parts, and more in detail in others, Harcourt related what we have been recapitulating to our readers, to the worthy Elton, who never experienced so many different sensations during so short a period. He sympathized in all his young friend's troubles, and participated in all his happiness; vowed vengeance upon the Mackenzies, called down blessings upon the heads of his dear boy's benefactors, whom he longed to be acquainted with, and protested that he would willingly spend half his fortune in bringing his enemies to justice; as he was now convinced
this

this child of his adoption must possess uncommon merit to make himself such friends with the disadvantages he laboured under.

Harcourt had requested his advice respecting the best method of informing Madame de Valcarné, and the Fiervals that he was at last delivered from the clutches of the fiends who had torn him away from what he held most dear in the world; and he observed, that it was too obvious Madame de Valcarné's predilection in his favour, had raised him some very powerful enemies in Martinico;—therefore, setting aside the late Revolution, he should think it madness for him to return thither, at least till he had learned whether his friends had discovered the author of his sufferings—a circumstance which would alone, in his opinion, enable him to do it with safety; for whoever had him decoyed on board the vile American pirate's ship, would certainly devise some fresh scheme, either to confine him for life, or perhaps murder him at once, should he
afford

afford them an opportunity by a precipitate return to Martinico. He therefore recommended his writing the exact dictates of his heart, and an account of what had befallen him since their separation, to the amiable Madame de Valcarné, and his kind friends the Governor and his Lady. He (Mr. Elton) would inclose his packet under cover to an American merchant, settled at Nantes, in Brittany, with whom he was sufficiently acquainted to take such a liberty, and request that he would forward them to Martinico by the first vessel which sailed for that island : this was the most expeditious method that he could devise for relieving the anxiety such friends must doubtless feel for his fate.

Harcourt was perfectly of his opinion, and would have devoted the night to his pen if Mr. Elton had not requested him to postpone writing till the morning ; he must be, nay he looked very much fatigued, and he should, in the name of all his friends, insist upon his dedicating the night to repose.

They

They would spend the following day at Moudon, and he would take care that he should meet with no interruptions till he had finished his letters ; and hoped he would remember that *he* now had it in *his* power to convince Madame de Valcarné of the disinterestedness of his love, should she have suffered in any respect through the late Revolution.

Such an idea afforded Harcourt the most heartfelt pleasure, though he was rather humbled to reflect that he had in a manner consented to become a dependant even upon this excellent man's bounty ;—for, like his father, he certainly possessed a very proud heart ; nor would he have married the richest woman in Christendom, except he had been convinced that he owed her hand to her regard, not to her compassion.

Having promised not to rob Morpheus of his due, and agreed that a good bed was a luxury to which he had long been a stranger,
Mr.

Mr. Elton insisted upon his retiring immediately after supper, assured that his health must have suffered very materially from the abominable treatment he had met with during his late voyage, and the anxiety of mind he must have laboured under at the same time.

This excellent man felt he had now got an heir, whom he should be proud of introducing as such to his numerous acquaintance, who all knew that it had ever been his determination to leave the bulk of his fortune to his wife's, and consequently, as he ever said, his own grandson; and by this appellation he mentioned the young stranger to his valet while undressing, and desired him to inform his fellow-servants that it was his wish they should all treat him with the utmost respect; and hinting that he did not wish it to be known they had met so oddly, and, on both sides, so very unexpectedly.

Mr.

Mr. Elton was very much beloved by his household ; his will was of course law among them, and as they knew their master was particularly anxious to discover a young relation he had abroad, they were very happy he had been so fortunate.

The following day Harcourt spent in writing to his friends in the West Indies. He had some notion of also addressing the worthy Principal Douglas ; but as Mr. Elton proposed taking Paris in their road to England, and he thought it very possible that the good old man might have left France, convinced the present measures could not meet his approbation, he gave up the idea, and was infinitely flattered by the pains his kind friend took to expedite his packet, which was sent off express that very evening, with absolute orders to the American gentleman to forward it immediately at any expence.

After

After supper, the generous Elton delicately observed the caution he had given his servants respecting their meeting; adding—

“ As I can suppose, my dear George, like myself, you are averse to exciting idle curiosity, and as it is a measure I shall entreat you will sanction by an Act of Parliament at my death, will you oblige me so far as to adopt my name ?”

Harcourt felt the benevolent motive from which this wish originated, as he was conscious his own name, particularly among his countrymen, might lead to enquiries concerning his family, the thing of all others he wished to avoid.

His father's death was by no means dishonourable, but his grandfather's attachment to a cause that had of late years been so much reprobated, was certainly not calculated to cast any lustre upon the name his unfortunate father had been so proud of inheriting ;

heriting; he therefore readily agreed to exchange it for that of Elton, to the infinite satisfaction of the good old gentleman, who instead of taking the tour he had first intended, now chose to proceed immediately to Geneva, where he thought his grandson could provide himself with clothes and other articles, infinitely more to his satisfaction than at Lausanne or Vevay.

They therefore only slept one night at the former, and reached Geneva early the second day, took possession of an elegant commodious house without the gates of that populous city, provided for their reception by Mr. Elton's banker, who had been apprized of their intention of spending some time in the territories of this small, but pleasant Republic.

So many of the leading men in Geneva had made their fortunes in England, or in the East India Company's service, that Mr. Elton found himself almost at home, as he
had

had been in habits of intimacy with many of the former during their residence in London, and renewed the acquaintance with pleasure.

There were very few English either in the city or its environs, as the young gentlemen of that nation, upon their travels, preferred Lausanne for a residence ; but even Lausanne was now deserted for Evian, a small water-drinking place in Savoy, within twenty miles of the former city, and exactly opposite to the latter, from which it was separated by the celebrated lake so many authors have described with an enthusiasm bordering upon hyperbole.

The moment Elton was settled, he only thought of providing his grandson with every *et cetera* he stood in need of ; and as he found Harcourt's own orders were very limited, and confined merely to necessaries, he protested that he would take the arrangement upon himself : in consequence of which
resolution

resolution the young man was soon provided with every requisite for the equipment of a nobleman of the first rank ;—what could not be procured to Elton's mind at Geneva, was sent for from Lyons ; he was at the fountain head for watches, buckles, and such ornamental appendages to the dress of both sexes.

While he was thus completing what to him was the most agreeable task he had ever undertaken, as the regard he felt for his grandson increased daily, nay hourly, he heard of a pair of saddle-horses to be disposed of.

Gentle exercise would certainly be of infinite benefit to this child of his affection, who had not yet recovered his wonted colour, still less his former strength ; he therefore immediately waited upon the gentleman entrusted to dispose of the horses, which had been left for that purpose by a British Nobleman, who had been unfortunate at Faro ;
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and the sum they sold for was to be applied in part towards the payment of that, and numerous other debts he had left behind him.

Having heard this statement of facts, and learned three hundred pounds would answer every demand upon the young gentleman, Elton eagerly enquired—

“ And would no countryman step forward to save his Lordship’s honour?—But pray what is the price of the horses?”

“ Sixty guineas, Sir,” was the reply; “ and his Lordship’s creditors must trust to his honour for the rest; though I have not a doubt but they will get their money some time or other.”

“ It appears to me,” rejoined Elton, “ that the honour of my country, and of every Englishman, is concerned in this affair; therefore I shall take the horses, and in return put it in your power to discharge all his Lordship’s debts;—tell his creditors
the

the propofal was unfolicited, and inform his Lordship that his countryman merely chofe to follow the golden rule, without aiming at any further acquaintance, much lefs thanks from him, for fo fimple an action. I muft therefore entreat that you would not even mention my name when you write to his Lordship."

The gentleman to whom this fpeech was addreffed, could hardly believe Elton in earneft, till he gave him a draft for the money, and defired him to fend the horfes to his ftables;—he then ventured to exprefs aftonifhment at his liberality; but finding Elton was particularly averfe to liftening to his own praifes, he contented himfelf with promifing to conform in every refpect to his wifhes.

When Elton returned home, he careleffly told Harcourt he had bought him a pair of faddle-horfes, out of compaffion to the poor animals, which were Englifh, and confe-

quently wanted an English master; for neither the Genevais, Swiss, or French, took half the care of their horses the British did.

As he always found some excuse for loading him with presents, Harcourt assured him with a smile, much as he gave him credit for his benevolence, he was not the dupe of his compassion in the present instance.

“Why then place my purchase to its real account,” replied Elton; “my wish that you should take more exercise.—I only wish I could convince you, as your amiable Madame de Valcerné once said, money was never of so much value in my eyes, as since it has enabled me to place you in the situation your birth entitled you to;—and remember, once for all, whatever you may think, I know that I am only doing my duty.”

Before George could make any reply, a servant informed them the horses were come.

A groom, who had attended his Lordship to Switzerland, and had had the care of his stud since his departure, for very substantial reasons, viz. that his wages were to be paid when the beasts were disposed of, brought them to Mr. Elton, and proffered his service to attend upon that gentleman, in the same capacity he had been employed by my Lord ; adding—

“ And indeed, Sir, it will be doing an act of charity to take me into your family ; for the trifle of wages I had to receive won't carry me to England ; and my Lord left no orders for *Monf. Chevalier* to pay for my journey, nor even my board since he has been gone ; but he promised to give me a character, if so be you would be so good as to take me ?”

Elton looked at his grandson as if for his approbation ; and the expression of compassion upon Harcourt's countenance, convinced him that he should gratify both their feelings

feelings by engaging the unfortunate lad, whose master had left him to starve in a foreign country, or beg his way home.

Sam was therefore added to Mr. Elton's suite without any farther enquiries into his character; and the lad felt highly pleased with the exchange he had made, and threw by his shewy fashionable livery without regret, to assume the modest garb that distinguished Elton's ancient domestics.

Monf. Chevalier, struck by the novelty of the thing, much more than by the generosity, told all his Lordship's creditors to whom they were indebted for the prompt payment of their debts, and many of them felt the obligation.

The following day, Elton and his grandson dined, by invitation, at a gentleman's, who had long been in a lucrative way of business in London, and was lately returned to

spend the fruits of his industry in his native country.

Elton's generosity, or, as some of the company called it, folly, had been seriously discussed before his arrival; and when he entered, he was assailed by compliments from all sides, to his infinite mortification; and, by way of putting a conclusion to nonsense, as he termed it, merely calculated to lower the company in his opinion, he said, that he was sorry to find, what he had supposed any other gentleman present would have done in his place, seemed to excite such extraordinary wonder. This tacit reproach silenced the party, while Harcourt felt his esteem for his patron increase, as such an action was so congenial to his own disposition.

The master of the house swore (and what was more extraordinary, spoke truth) had he known the occasion of Lord ——'s precipitate retreat from Geneva, he would have stepped forward to his assistance

“ He

“ He was an Englishman—that was a sufficient passport to your favour, Villaret,” said one of the guests, in a reproachful tone.

“ I made my fortune in England,” warmly rejoined Villaret; “ and I think every Englishman in distress has a right to share what was earned among his countrymen.”

“ Bravo! friend Villaret,” said a Caledonian, who, from motives of economy, had fixed his abode near Geneva; “ but had I been as able as that gentleman,” bowing to Elton, “ to give way to the propensity I ever feel to assist my countrymen, I would have sent the horses after his Lordship; which would have almost ensured the repayment of what I had advanced, or, at all events, have laid that Nobleman under a very great obligation that he could not have failed to have acknowledged in some way or other.”

“ That might have been acting prudently, Sir,” said Elton, “ but I neither wish to humiliate, nor to pay my court to his

Lordship;—what I did was the result of the warm regard I shall ever feel for the honour of my country; and I was far from wishing, or expecting, that the actions of an obscure individual like myself would either become a theme of censure or applause.”

The conversation then took a different turn, and the day passed very agreeably.

A Swift, whose honesty, like that of his countrymen in general, was almost proverbial, had been engaged by Elton's banker as his grandson's valet; and if he had not perceived that Harcourt was really averse to the measure, he would have increased his suite still more upon his account; for his chief, nay only, study was how most to contribute to his comfort and pleasure.

Yet Harcourt was far from happy, and could not help fancying that he was shining in borrowed plumes—an idea his unfortunate father could not brook, though he had a
much

much greater claim upon the worthy Elton's generosity than his son.

These reflections were not calculated to raise his spirits ; and he found that he possessed more of his father's pride than he was aware of. Yet, situated as he was, how could he have rejected the offers of his benefactor ? to whose kind solicitude he was indebted for the assistance and countenance he had met with from the Consul at Smyrna. And was not his father's, as well as his own, a very mistaken notion of independence ?—This was a point he could not solve to his satisfaction.

Madame de Valcarné's answer would, in a great measure, decide his future fate ;—to restore her to affluence, suppose she had been a sufferer through the new order of things, would alone reconcile him to the idea of sharing the profits of the worthy Elton's industry and talents.

Indeed his anxiety to hear from Martinico increased every day, though he knew that he stood no chance of receiving any answers to his late letters for three, nay perhaps four months, and they were to be directed to Mr. Elton's house in London.

At times he dreaded, that whoever had conspired against his happiness, had also contrived to make his departure from Martinico appear the result of his choice, not necessity ; in that case how justly must Madame de Valcarné and the Fiervals, who were the soul of honour, despise him !—His letters might exculpate him, perhaps ; but some more successful rival might have supplanted him in Madame de Valcarné's affection.

No evils are greater than imaginary ones, Mr. Elton sometimes hinted, when Harcourt placed his want of spirits to the last mentioned cause ; and perceiving his health, already, as he had before suspected, injured by the ill-treatment he had met with during his

his forced cruize, seemed to decline as rapidly as his spirits since their arrival at Geneva, where they had now spent six weeks, he proposed, by way of changing the scene, to pass a short time at Evian.

Harcourt, to whom all parts of the globe were equal, was yet pleased with the proposal, and endeavoured to shake off that listless apathy to which he was become a prey; as he often reproached himself for not endeavouring at least to appear cheerful, in return for the favours Elton was conferring upon him.

The Swiss valet was sent forward to procure them proper accommodations, and next morning they followed him to Evian, which had little to boast of except its salubrious spring; as, like most towns in Savoy, it was badly built, very dirty, and, setting aside situation, very unpleasant. The environs are truly romantic, and the lake affords a continual source of amusement, as well as

beautiful prospects to the fashionable and unfashionable lounge, with which, like all other water-drinking places in every part of the world, Evian abounds.

In the morning, before breakfast, the company assemble at the Spring, within a mile of the town, where they spend an hour or more; the forenoon is dedicated to airings on foot, on horseback, or in carriages, according to the inclinations, or more properly finances of the various parties, who usually dine together at different boarding-houses, except a few of the greater or rich English, who chuse to take their meals at their own lodgings. The afternoons are dedicated to parties upon the lake, or its environs; and the evenings spent at the Rooms, where the elderly folks amuse themselves at Faro, and the younger part of the company with dancing.

Elton highly approved of the sociability of some of their arrangements; and the

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the variety of people of various nations who resorted to Evian, made it far preferable to any English bathing or water-drinking place; but as he was not at a time of life to enter into the spirit of the company, he chose to breakfast, dine, and sup at his own apartments, though he particularly wished George would have joined some of the dinner parties, as there were many Genevian families among the multitude he had been introduced to at Mr. Villaret's;—but Harcourt, independent of the little desire he felt to mix in any gay parties, thought it would be a very ill requite to his kind patron, to leave him to dine or sup by himself; he therefore assured him that he should enjoy his society much more than mingling among the various motley groups assembled in search of amusement in, what might be called, so remote a part of Europe.

Elton felt his motive, and thought if he could but remove the habitual dejection which preyed upon his favourite's spirits,

and clouded one of the most intelligent, animated countenances that he had ever beheld, he should be completely happy. For no one could be, nor was, more politely attentive than his new-found grandson: his wish to oblige was wholly untinged with servility, and as far from being the offspring of self-interest; a too proud, it might almost be termed, a haughty spirit was his only failing, and, but for his superior understanding, might have degenerated into arrogance.

Till he found himself a dependant upon Elton's bounty, he had not been aware he so much resembled his father in point of disposition:—As the Marquis de Fierval's secretary, he was independent and a gentleman; as Madame de Valcarné's chosen lover, he was the happiest of mortals; as her husband, he would have been the first man in the island.

Such

Such were his reflections upon the past ; the future was hid in obscurity, and the present he did not enjoy ;—for Harcourt was not a phœnix, though he possessed innumerable virtues ; and was deservedly beloved, esteemed, nay respected by his munificent patron.

CHAP. IX.

THE second evening after their arrival, Elton and his grandson went to the Rooms. They had received the compliments of their Genevian friends during the course of the day, and learned from them that there were a vast many English at Evian, among whom the Earl and Countess of Monteith, and Lady Juliana Valtravers shone pre-eminent. The two former were of that non-descript order of beings who would have passed through the world unnoticed, if they had not been distinguished by a title. Not so their niece and ward:—*imprimis*, she was a beauty; secondly, in her own opinion, a wit; and, lastly,

lastly, though not her least merit in many people's eyes, she was an heiress.

Her father and mother had both paid the debt of nature before she had attained her twelfth year, since which period she had been under the care of her maternal aunt, Lady Monteith; whose husband and the Duke of Durham, one of the most ancient as well as respectable Peers Great Britain could boast, were her guardians.

Before she lost her parents, they had agreed to bestow her upon Lord Viscount Dunraven, only son to the Earl of Monteith; and she had been assured the last wish her mother breathed, who had survived her father near two years, was that she would, at a proper age, fulfil this prudential family engagement.

The Viscount was now completing the grand tour, and was to give his father and
mother,

mother, and fair bride elect, the meeting at Geneva the first week in September.

Hitherto Lady Juliana had not expressed a wish to dispute the will of her deceased parents; indeed, as she had ever been taught to believe Lord Dunraven would be so enchanted with his superior good fortune as to commit the reins of government to her hands, she foresaw that she should be very happy in the wedded state, and looked forward to a change of name, as to an emancipation from all controul.

She had been presented at St. James's, and would most probably, the Earl feared, have been surrounded by admirers, had he allowed her much time to display her graces in the fashionable world; he therefore, with the concurrence of his brother guardian, who smiled at his prudent foresight, proposed to his fair ward spending the summer in Switzerland, by way of shewing her a little of the world before she married. She readily

readily consented ; they therefore embarked for Ostend early in the Spring, crossed the Netherlands into Germany, and from that empire into Switzerland, which they entered at Basle, and had crossed the lake from Vevay to Evian, two days before the Mr. Eltons arrived there.

All the English, who were chiefly young men upon their travels, paid the most assiduous court to this distinguished party whenever they appeared in public ; and her Ladyship was surrounded by a croud of admirers of different nations.

When George and Mr. Elton entered the Rooms, the manly figure, handsome countenance, and elegant appearance of the former prepossessed every one present in his favour ; and several ladies whispered his praises loud enough for him to benefit by their remarks.

“ Do let me look at this Adonis,” exclaimed Lady Juliana, pushing a young
Baronet

Baronet on one side for that purpose.—He was a very fine fellow, she thought, and very much the gentleman; however, without making these remarks, she enquired, “Who is he?”

“The grandson of his companion,” said a young British Officer, who was come to Evian in hopes of picking up money enough at Faro to enable him to leave Lausanne, where he had for some time resided; but who had seen the Mr. Eltons at Mr. Villaret’s, during a short trip he had lately taken to Geneva.

“But what is his name?” rejoined her Ladyship; “or what is more to the purpose, is he a man of consequence?”

“Undoubtedly, my Lady, if riches can make a man so—but he springs from a very sweet source, dates, figs, &c.; for his granddad is, or was, I positively forget which, an eminent Turkey merchant.”

“Oh barbarous!” retorted her Ladyship, vexed with herself to think she had taken a *citizen, a low trader*, for a man of fashion.

“What

“What can have brought the good folks so far from the sound of Bow-bell?—How strangely out of their element they must feel!—I should like to hear some of their remarks upon the countries they have travelled through; I am sure they would have novelty at least to recommend them.—Can they speak French, I wonder?”

“It should seem so,” said Sir James Barclay, the young Baronet already mentioned; “for the young man is addressing some Genevais, who I know can’t speak English; and let him be a citizen, or a Peer, he is a very handsome fellow.”

“Handsome!” retorted the Officer, “why I have seen a handsome Irish porter; but you may easily distinguish that he is not a man of fashion.”

“And would not you relinquish that title, Captain,” said a young Peer, “for that of a man of fortune?”

The Captain bowed. Lords are privileged folks all the world over; and the Officer retreated

treated to pay his respects to the very man he had been endeavouring to lower in her Ladyship's opinion; who, notwithstanding the sovereign contempt she entertained for traders of all denominations, thought the young merchant by far the most elegant man in the room.

Her reverie was broken in upon by the Baronet's claiming her promised hand, and leading her to the upper end of the room.

"Would, or rather could, the citizen dance?" she wondered.

As Sir James and she were advancing to their places, she found that he was going to make the attempt in the cotillion below her's; he seemed, she thought, to have a proper sense of his inferiority.

Sir James had but just emerged from College, and was by no means a proficient in the elegant science of dancing; he could make
shift

shift to blunder along in a country-dance, but displayed his native awkwardness in perfection when he attempted to figure in a cotillion; however, as practice makes us perfect, he chose to exhibit his improvement upon every occasion, at the risk of putting every one else out.

Never to be sure was any thing so tormenting to her Ladyship, who seriously longed to box his ears, while he was throwing his arms and legs about in every direction, to the great annoyance of his neighbours, and amusement of the lookers on, who were bestowing the greatest encomiums upon the elegant Englishman in the next set, and declared him to be the best dancer in the room.

Her Ladyship was therefore not sorry when she returned to her seat, and immediately signified her determination not to dance any more; and soon after retired, angry with herself, and with the finest gentleman

tleman in the room for his vulgar extraction, and enraged with her late partner, who must have made her appear to very great disadvantage in the eyes of a man who had studied the graces too successfully himself not to notice the deficiencies of others.

She spent a sleepless night, and declined going to the Spring in the morning; her absence of course brought all her countrymen, Elton and his grandson excepted, to express the disappointment they had met with, and their hopes that it was not occasioned by indisposition.

These gentlemen had at first amused her Ladyship, and their attention gratified her vanity; but, for the first time in her life, she was displeased with their compliments, and vented her spleen by turning them into ridicule: she rallied the Baronet most unmercifully upon his dancing, and requested, as the highest compliment he could pay her, that he would never make her a party concerned

cerned in the affair when he again chose to expose himself.

“ Why positively, my Lady,” said Captain Needham, the *needy* Officer, “ the young trader has cut us all out ; if I did not know him to be a favourite of Plutus, I should have supposed dancing was his profession.”

“ Does not your Ladyship admire,” said the young Peer, the Earl of Valmont, “ Needham’s modesty ?—Young Elton is a gentleman ; his education and fortune place him upon an equality with every man of sense of any rank.”

“ Your Lordship grows eloquent in his cause,” replied her Ladyship, with assumed indifference ; “ let us hear your opinion, Sir James ?”

“ That he can cut capers with any body, my Lady ; but what is still more to the purpose, can count guineas with any of us, and makes a noble use of the gifts of Fortune :

it was his grandfather who bought the Earl of ——'s horses."

Her Ladyship had not heard the story. Lord Valmont told it with warmth and feeling ; adding, he should make interest to be introduced to both grandfather and grandson.

Needham offered his services ; and the Baronet advised him to cultivate such valuable acquaintance.

The party then separated ; and in the evening the Earl and Baronet entered into conversation with the Eltons, without waiting for the ceremonial of an introduction ; and the former liked the young man so well, that he gave him the outlines of the Monteith family history, spoke of Lady Juliana in very high terms, and acknowledged that he thought Lord Dunraven would be very happy in such a connection.

These

These encomiums induced George to regard her Ladyship with more attention than he had done the day before : the scrutiny turned out to her advantage, though he perceived she fancied herself of a superior order of beings, and determined not to gratify her vanity by requesting his new friends to introduce him more particularly to her notice ; as the supercilious glances she honoured him with, convinced him that she would enjoy making him feel the distance rank had placed between them.

“ How unlike the amiable Madame de Valcarné !” he sighed to himself ; while her Ladyship, who had caught his eyes upon her several times, and now remarked the gloom his latter reflection had spread over his fine countenance, placed his reverie wholly to the power of her charms, and presumed he was deploring the vulgarity of his origin, which forbade him to entertain any hopes of being even noticed by a woman of her rank ;—but still she involuntarily

drew comparisons between him and every other gentleman present; they all terminated in his favour, and she found every other lady in the room was of the same way of thinking. Whoever addressed her, either directly or indirectly, gave her their opinion of young Elton, which perfectly coincided with her own.

She retired vexed and low-spirited, and almost determined to feign indisposition, or frame some other excuse that might induce Lord and Lady Monteith to quit Evian; but always found some plausible reason in her own mind for delaying her departure.

Thus a fortnight slipped away; during which time George became an universal favourite, was constantly invited to every private party, except at Lord Monteith's; and happy were those ladies whom he favoured with his hand at the Rooms, or his attention at the Spring.

His

His countrymen even deserted Lady Juliana Valtravers, to enjoy his company and conversation; for, as he had not been introduced to the Earl of Monteith, or his party, a silent bow on his side, and a formal curtsy on her Ladyship's, were all that had hitherto passed between them.

CHAP. X.

MR. ELTON was anxiously solicitous about his grandson's health, and therefore made a point of taking his airings on horse-back ;—a carriage was not sufficient exercise for his age ; and by their pursuing different roads, they should have an opportunity of entertaining each other with what they had seen when they met at dinner.

George, conscious that every proposal of this excellent man's was fraught with his accustomed benevolence, and that he could not oblige him more than by acceding to his wishes,

wishes, made no objection to his arrangement.

He was by no means in a frame of mind to relish the incessant dissipation he engaged in to oblige his amiable benefactor; therefore determined to devote some hours of the day, as well as night, to a retrospection of past events, which he began almost to fancy were merely pleasant dreams, or chimeras, that would never be realized.

He generally mounted his horse immediately after breakfast, and took the most solitary paths, where he could, uninterrupted, enjoy the beautiful romantic views the craggy rocks (overhanging the lake in many places) afforded.

Meillerie, which would never have excited any traveller's notice, but for Rousseau's "Nouvelle Heloise," was one of his favourite rides; and as the house the Earl of Monteith inhabited was situated on the road

that led thither, he frequently passed his Lordship's windows, and several times caught sight of Lady Juliana; indeed her eyes involuntarily followed him as long as she could keep him in view. He was remarkably well mounted, and a very good horseman in her opinion.

The road he so often took was the only one she had never taken in the carriage;—she therefore enquired where it led, and was informed to Meillerie; but that it was only calculated for equestrians, as it was very narrow, and in many places very rugged.

Lady Juliana desired the Earl would procure her a horse; she was convinced that this road afforded some very sublime views. The Earl said it was hardly worth while for the short time they had to stay; besides such excursions might be attended with danger.

Lady

Lady Juliana's will had long been law in the Earl's family, and the slightest contradiction never failed to excite a tempest in her fair bosom, that required infinite submission in the Earl and Countess to appease. Whether such a disposition was exactly calculated to make their son happy, they neither cared nor even reflected upon, while they were certain her fortune would add considerably to his riches. She therefore calmly repeated her request to the Earl, who foreseeing, notwithstanding her apparent placidity, it would be in vain to contend the point, gave orders in consequence, and next morning she was informed that a horse had been hired, and would be at the door at her own hour.

She should go out between ten and eleven, she said.

Elton, when he took the road (the beauties of which she was so anxious to explore) generally passed their house about ten; and,

if he should happen to ride that morning, she should prefer following him to being overtaken.

But these were reflections she did not think necessary to communicate to the Earl and Countess, and she remained stationary at her dressing-room window till she began to think Elton had taken some other road ; and had come to a similar resolution herself, when the trampling of horses revived her spirits, and she saw Elton ride slowly by.

She retreated hastily from the window, concluding that he loitered thus to obtain a glance of her handsome face ; for it was not in nature to suppose that he could have seen her with indifference. Indeed she had often felt tempted to pity him ;—it was impossible, so contrary to etiquette, she should even notice such a man ;—yet, poor fellow, could he help his grandfather, and doubtless his father, having been plodding mechanics?—Undoubtedly not : and if she should, *par hazard,*

hazard, come up with him, and any very favourable opportunity occurred, why, out of mere compassion, she would address him.

Eager, therefore, to confer such a mark of her condescension upon the much-admired trader, she ordered her horse to be led out; and, attended by a couple of the Earl's servants, hastened to convince Elton that she could be polite even to a merchant.

She soon perceived him riding a foot's pace, at some distance before her. He was meditating, perhaps, upon the neglect, not to say scorn, with which she had hitherto treated him; she would cheer his despondency by a passing bow and a smile.

She put her horse into a canter for this benevolent purpose; but, unfortunately, she had chosen a very narrow, and even dangerous part of the road to display her horsemanship and her compassion. Hearing the feet of more horses than his groom's behind him, George turned

his head, and perceived Lady Juliana just passing his servant, who had alighted to break the way for her.

He was rather surpris'd that her Ladyship should chuse to ride fast in such a road; however, as it was impossible for her to pass him without endangering her neck, he followed his groom's example, and had just led his horse out of the road as she came up.

"I am shocked to death, Sir," said her Ladyship, "that you have taken the trouble to alight; I am in no haste, only my horse chose to be rather violent this morning, so I thought it best to give him his head."

George made an assenting bow, and then said—

"I believe your Ladyship may now pass with safety."

"You are very kind, Sir; but I think I shall climb the hill before us on foot."

"Will

“ Will your Ladyship permit me to assist you in alighting ?”

Before he had concluded his speech, Lady Juliana was upon her feet, calling out to her attendants to take her horse.

George was rather at a loss how to treat this hitherto, to him, disdainful lady of quality ;—to appear to resent her past behaviour would, in his opinion, display a contracted mind, to which he was far superior ; he, however, determined to follow her lead, and be distantly respectful, or familiarly attentive, according to her behaviour. He therefore walked forward by her side, still leading his horse, and answering some of the numerous questions she assailed him with, till she made a full stop, declaring herself quite out of breath, and that she believed she must relinquish her first intention.

George now gave his horse to his groom, and ventured to make an offer of his arm,

though he more than once felt tempted to pursue his ride, and leave the fair pedestrian to follow her own inclinations :—this would have been both fashionable, and in some measure a sort of retaliation for never having been invited to Lord Monteith's, nor even noticed by any of his party.

He had determined not to press her to accept of his support ; we must therefore presume her Ladyship had a presentiment she had not an Amadis or an Oroondates to deal with, by the condescension with which she put her arm within his, and continued to apologize for having deranged him. She then professed herself delighted with the prospect :—Meillerie, which they now had in view, afforded her an excellent subject. Savoy in general was a horrid dreary country, she observed ; and then proceeded to give her opinion of France and Switzerland.

George thought many of her remarks very judicious, and her Ladyship seemed to have forgot

forgot how the time passed while she continued to ramble upon the rocks at the back of Meillerie. It however became necessary to think of returning homewards, and to form some excuse to get rid of her elegant companion; she therefore, as soon as they descended into Meillerie, where their horses waited, wished him a very good morning, and entreated she might not prevent him from continuing his ride.

George convinced her he could take a hint, as he instantly, and with a most provoking ironical smile, she thought, assured her he would no longer intrude upon her Ladyship; remounting his horse as he concluded, and galloping off towards Evian.

“ He was piqued at her wanting to get rid of him. Well, such presumptuous beings deserved to be mortified; had Lord Valmont, Sir James, or the Captain met them together, she should have been teased to death; not to mention her silly guardian

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and

and wise aunt—poor souls ! they would have held forth upon her condescension ;—still Elton ought to have remained till she was once more on horseback : perhaps he was afraid of offending.”—Such were her reflections as she rode home, where she arrived without again overtaking the trader, or meeting any one else ; and of course did not mention his name to either the Earl or Countess.

George was not so reserved to the worthy Elton, who was highly amused by his account of his morning's ride, and prognosticated he had made a conquest of importance.

George's acute sense of his dependant situation was daily wearing off, and as his gratitude towards his kind grandfather (for such he began to fancy Elton) daily increased, he was particularly flattered to find he had it in his power to contribute to the good man's happiness ; and could he have known
whether

whether he was justified in Madame de Valcarné's eyes—whether he still retained the same place in her heart, and a few more *et ceteras*, he would have been perfectly happy; and this he acknowledged to Elton, who protested, though few people were more averse to gaming, that he would lay any sum he should see him married to the handsome West Indian before he was a twelvemonth older. He then undertook to prove that none of his Martinico friends could suppose his precipitate departure the effect of choice, and adduced such solid reasons in support of his assertion, that George was almost convinced his friends must be of his way of thinking.

The Monteith party were not at the Rooms that evening; but next morning, though George took another road, he again met Lady Juliana, who stopped her horse to speak to him.

She told him she was half afraid of venturing to take the Meillerie road alone,

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though

though the views it afforded were so picturesque ; but she believed she should summon her courage to her assistance the next day.

Was not this making a sort of an appointment with him ? George thought ; yet he reflected how often he had himself unthinkingly said many things, which might admit of very different interpretations to the one he intended, and as his heart was not at all concerned in her Ladyship's actions, he paid the less attention to what she said ; and, for fear of appearing vain, did not mention their second *rencontre* to his grandfather, as he now habitually called Elton. And as her Ladyship did not seem inclined to treat him with the same familiarity in public, he thought she had merely given him to understand she was going to Meillerie, by way of disappointing him if he built any hopes of growing intimate, from her late condescension ; he therefore determined sedulously to avoid her, and, by Elton's earnest desire, he accompanied

accompanied Lord Valmont upon a tour round the head of the lake, to visit the famous salt mines at Bex.

The Earl was a sensible, well-informed young man, upon his return from his travels, and was very happy to meet with a kindred mind in young Elton, who, he thought, improved very much upon intimacy.

They returned to Evian just in time to be present at a *fête a Savoyarde* Nobleman, more renowned for his folly than his taste, chose to give a select party of the company assembled at that place.

Mr. Elton, senior, had received a very pressing invitation, as well as his grandson, in return for numerous dinners and suppers the Baron de Blounai had partaken of at their apartments; but, as he foresaw the company would stay very late, and that the proposed entertainment would not afford him
much

much amusement, he had begged to be excused, but insisted upon George's accepting the invitation.

The Castle of Blounai was about three miles from Evian, and had once been a magnificent building, but was at this period in a very ruinous state;—it was however put in the best order possible; the rooms prepared for the reception of the company, had been painted *al fresco*, but the damp had totally obliterated all traces of the artist's skill, and unfortunately every floor in the house was stone. The Baron therefore appropriated the largest saloon for the ball-room, in hopes that the size and decorations would make ample amends for its other deficiencies; the additional ornaments it received upon this occasion were a quantity of tin sconces hung at proper distances round the walls, to hold the tallow-candles with which it was illuminated.

The

The gardens were large, and had been well laid out ; they were cleared from weeds, and the walks were swept, as it was presumed the company, who had been requested not to make it late, would prefer walking without doors till supper ; which, according to the custom of the country, was to be served at eight o'clock, after which they were to dance all night if they chose.

The Monteith party were of course invited.—Lady Juliana had been very much piqued with George for his want of gallantry ; fortunately she at last guessed he had accompanied the Earl from prudential motives, and as she certainly should never have forgiven him, had he ventured even to implore her pity, she thought him much in the right to shun her company. Yet it was certainly very provoking that he was not a Lord ; for had he possessed a title, he would have turned the heads of all the women at Evian : so it was, perhaps, as well he did not. And
after

after all, he was not to be blamed for endeavouring to recover his reason; yet, hurt to think that he should even struggle to break his supposed chains, she, adorned for conquest, determined to fix the roving captive for ever : and, had George's heart been equally at liberty, she certainly might have succeeded ; for few women could, when she chose, be more captivating than Lady Juliana Valtravers.—As she protested she was curious to take a good view of the ancient castle, her party was among the first that reached Blounai.

Elton was not yet come :—" he had, perhaps, altered his mind, or was afraid to venture ; either supposition was truly provoking." She could not even laugh at the tawdry, ill-chosen dresses of the Savoyarde Lords and Ladies, though Captain Needham took infinite pains to amuse her, by turning the entertainer, his house, and guests into ridicule. She walked from him with undisguised disdain,

dain, and left the poor Captain petrified by her *hauteur* and visible bad humour, while she took the Baron's daughter's arm, and sallied forth to admire the beauties of the situation, as she told her companion, who lamented that it was too late to enjoy the prospect a fine terrace they had in view, afforded.

However a far more agreeable sight now arrested her Ladyship's attention, as Lord Valmont, Sir James Barclay, Elton, and several more young men were approaching. She stopped to receive their compliments; then addressing the Earl and Elton, enquired where they had hid themselves for the last week?

His Lordship mentioned where they had been, and protested he was very happy to find himself of consequence enough to be missed.

"I did

“ I did not mean to make you vain, my Lord ; but the Genevais ladies complained loudly of your having deprived them of the only good dancer at Evian.” This was said smiling at Elton ; and she continued—“ Pray where are you all rambling ?—Mademoiselle de Blounai and me are going to ascend yon terrace.”

The gentlemen of course joined their party. Her Ladyship was in very high spirits, and the conversation grew general, till they were summoned to supper, which was, like the Baron’s pocket, very light. They therefore soon adjourned into the ball-room, and the master of the feast led out Lady Juliana.

There were more gentlemen than ladies present ; of course many of the former were doomed to be spectators, and, much to the regret of all the belles assembled, Elton chose to be a spectator during the three first dances, and was just preparing to make his exit quietly,

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quietly, when an old Piedmontese Nobleman approached him, saying—

“ May I entreat, Sir, you will do me the favour to take my place in the next dance ? I have engaged a very elegant young lady, who I am sure will think herself very much obliged to me for having pressed such a dancer into her service.

Elton bowed, and readily agreed to the proposal ; and without disclaiming the old gentleman's polite compliment, promised to endeavour to deserve it.

The old General, for such he was, seemed highly pleased, and immediately led him to Lady Juliana, assuring her, when he presented him as his substitute, that she would be envied by every lady in the room, and that Mr. Elton was the only gentleman he should have ventured to recommend to her notice upon such an occasion.

Her

Her Ladyship's eyes sparkled with delight while she rallied the old gentleman for his laziness; but she very graciously accepted Elton's hand, and suffered him to lead her to join the dancers, and never exerted herself so much as while figuring with the *trader*; who, on his side, much to her satisfaction, fully supported the reputation he had obtained.

As soon as she was once more seated, she said—

“ Now, Sir, you will be obliged to run the gauntlet through all the Savoyarde Misses—you can't sit down again. I positively deserve the general thanks of the company for my plan.”

George instantly conceived her meaning, and after paying her a few very acceptable compliments, said, he hoped her Ladyship would add to the obligation she had already conferred upon him by deigning to accept
his

his hand once more during the course of the evening.

“Agreed,” she replied, with infinite good-humour; “nay, I shall feel myself very much indebted to you if you will allow me to say I am engaged, should any of these old Piedmontese Nobles torment me again.”

It is needless to say Elton entreated she would consider him at her command, and was favoured with her hand so often, that he could not be blind to the marked preference with which she treated him.

Gratified vanity is a very pleasing sensation.—George thought he had never spent so agreeable an evening since he had left Martinico, and retired in excellent spirits to court that repose he seldom less wanted, and highly amused Elton, the next morning, by his animated description of the Baron's *fête*. To see him in such spirits was gratifying to

the old gentleman, who protested he had been much more diverted by his description, than he could have been by being present.

CHAP. XI.

THE following day Sir James Barclay paid the Eltons a visit while they were at breakfast; and after declaring he would take no denial, proceeded to entreat they would both favour him with their company to dinner. There was a boat full of countrymen just arrived from Laufanne, and several more who had agreed to give these the meeting, were come in from Geneva; they were most of them his fellow-collegians, and he had engaged them all to dine at his apartments.

Mr.

Mr. Elton, senior, with his usual good-humoured frankness, declined the proposal, assuring the Baronet his age rendered him very unfit for such parties, but made his grandson promise to oblige him; and he therefore took his leave, after telling George six o'clock was their dinner hour, as he chose to treat them quite *à l'Angloise*.

Elton laughed as soon as he was gone, and observed that the Baronet seemed in high spirits, adding—

“ You will have a specimen of English manners to-day, George, which will convince you to what excellent purpose most of our young men travel. This will be a true jovial party, I foresee; therefore remember I shan't expect to see you very early, but would advise you to take a snap when I dine, as you are not yet accustomed to our fashionable dinner hours.”

George foresaw that the party he was engaged to meet would afford him some amusement; indeed he had already been very much diverted by the accounts Mr. Villaret gave him, at Geneva, of the follies of his young countrymen, who merely seemed to strive to outvie each other in extravagance and absurdity.

At the appointed hour he repaired to the Baronet's lodgings, and was introduced to all the new comers, who paid infinite respect to his fortune, and *swore* they should be happy to be better acquainted with him.

The dinner was really excellent, yet most of the guests languished for some good roast beef. The wines were good of their kind, they observed, but not to be compared to Port and Madeira; though had the same party been assembled at a tavern in England, they would not have been able to touch any thing but Claret, Burgundy, or Champagne.

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The various clever exploits each had performed at school, at College, or upon their travels, were related for the edification of the rest, till one of them exclaimed—

“ Who do you think left Lausanne about an hour before we did ? ”—No one presumed to guess.—“ Why, Jack Villars !—and upon such a scheme—how I did laugh when he let me into the outlines of his plan ! He bids fair to surpass us all—he has played his Governor such a trick !—Oh he deserves to be immortalized ! ”

“ Well, do give us the particulars, Claremont,” said the master of the feast ; “ we all know Lord John is no flincher, and that his prudent father is d——d avaricious.”

“ The Duke’s whole income would be insufficient to support the extravagance of his younger son,” rejoined Lord Valmont, “ if his Grace did not very properly put some limits to his expences.”

“ Thou art a prudent soul thyself, Val,” replied the Baronet, “ so art no judge of

the many necessary expences of a dashing young fellow."

"Rather of the many unnecessary ones, you mean, Sir James;—but pray let us hear what Lord John has done to deserve Mr. Claremont's praise."

"Why, outwitted the spy (in the form of a travelling companion) my Lord Duke had placed over him; a Scotch wiseacre, who had wormed himself into his Grace's esteem, and who used to preach prudence and economy for ever; he was purse-bearer, you must know, and every guinea he parted with went to his soul. However, to make short of my story, notwithstanding his hands were thus tied, and his spirit cramped, Jack formed a connection with a *bona roba* at Venice, which did not meet Mr. Pedagogue's approbation: he first remonstrated, and finally wrote the old Duke an account of the business—there was a rascal!—The consequence of his mean behaviour was obvious—the pitiful fellow received fresh instructions, and Jack a peremptory order from his father

father to quit Venice, with Mr. Mackenzie, upon receipt of these letters. There was no alternative, so Jack was forced to obey, and they immediately bent their course towards Lausanne, where it was proposed they should make some stay. But a few days after their arrival, the Governor fell ill (conscience stricken, I told Lord John), took to his bed, and, fortunately for his pupil, the fever seized his brain. Jack was too good a General to miss such an opportunity of making his escape; therefore, *sans ceremonie*, seized all the cash, letters of credit, &c. and set off this very morning, at daybreak, to console his Venetian Divinity for his precipitate departure; leaving Mackenzie to the care of the innkeeper, merely hinting that he was not very rich, nor very generous.—So I think there is little chance of his ever again being saddled with him for a companion.—No money, no Swiss, you know; and the Lausanne innkeepers have lost enough by indigent and swindling Englishmen; therefore, depend upon it, the officious friend

may lie and die, for what the master of the Golden Lion cares."

"I don't conceive his situation to be so desperate," said Lord Valmont; "I trust the Swifs have more feeling than Lord John Villars has displayed; for to leave the greatest enemy one had in such a situation, is, in my opinion, inexcusable.—What say you, Mr. Elton?"

"I am quite of your Lordship's opinion," replied George, very warmly, who had been all attention from the moment he heard the name of Mackenzie.

Many of the other young men inveighed against Lord John's behaviour, and even Mr. Claremont went with the tide, swore that the action had not struck him so at first, but acknowledged his friend Jack had carried his love of fun too far this time.

Lord Valmont enquired whether this Mackenzie was a man of family.

"Oh!

“Oh! God knows what his ancestors were,” replied Claremont; “he is the eldest son of a painter of that name. He was for some years secretary to the late Lord Everly, and was recommended by his successor to the Duke of Northington, who entrusted him with the care of Lord John. This is all I know about him.”

Lord Valmont said he would write to the innkeeper in his behalf; and thus the subject was dropped. Indeed the light wines, which hardly warmed them, many of them found began to make great innovations on their brains; and George was very happy to make his escape from this riotous party.

Mr. Elton had retired before he reached home; but next morning he was anxious to know how his grandson had been amused.—George recapitulated the heads of all that had passed, and expatiated with no small degree of warmth upon Lord John Villars's behaviour.

Elton declared he was a scandal to his country and family, and was eager to devise some method to supply the sick man's wants, notwithstanding he was related to those vile Mackenzies he held in the greatest abhorrence.

“ This gentleman is at least innocent with respect to me, Sir,” replied George, “ for I never saw him ; but he was my friend Mary's favourite brother, to whom she wished to recommend me ; and I have seen letters of his to his sister, which prepossess me very much in his favour.—I am sorry his late patron did not make some provision for him : like Mary, he seemed to possess a noble generous spirit, without the means of following the dictates of his honest heart.—What an uncomfortable life must he have led with such an unprincipled pupil!—Thank Heaven ! though, like himself, I have ever been a dependant, my patrons have all been men of worth and honour—they——”

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“ My dear fellow, excuse the interruption, but let me entreat you would discard that word, dependant, from your thoughts. You are entitled, even by our laws, to my fortune, as the undoubted heir of my late wife ;—my heart claims a nearer affinity to your’s, than the ties of consanguinity can give, and your society is become necessary to my happiness, nay almost to my existence ; so I may call myself a dependant upon your smiles !—But to revert to poor Mackenzie, for whom I am now very much interested—what must be done ?”

“ Why, I have long wished to see him, my dear Sir ; though I am not at all inclined to mention my former intimacy with his family.—I am your grandson now, and glory in the title, and as such I can wait upon him in your name, and then act according to circumstances ;—a boat will convey me in five hours to Lausanne, and I can return to-morrow or next day at farthest.”

“ I like your plan, but with your leave I will accompany you.—We are both almost

tired of Evian ; therefore we will not return here, except you wish it."

This was spoke with an intelligent smile. George, in an equally gay tone, assured him he had no such desire, acknowledging that he really grew impatient to set out for Paris.

" Ah poor Lady Juliana !" exclaimed the old gentleman, " for your sake we ought to hasten our departure ; so our horses shall proceed to Geneva, where we will meet them as soon as we have performed the duties of humanity.—Prepare our cards of *P. P. Congé*, which we will go and drop among our acquaintance, while the servants pack our trunks."

George set about the task, and in less than an hour they sallied forth to pay their visits. Having never been introduced to the Monteiths, they agreed merely to leave cards at their door, out of compliment to

Lady

Lady Juliana, who was coming out to mount her horse at the moment they reached the house.

She seemed amazed at their sudden departure, and changed colour; then in a hurried manner, to conceal her chagrin, endeavoured to rally George, but was unequal to the task. Her voice faltered while she enquired if they did not mean to return? and she with difficulty suppressed her rising tears, while she received the last compliments of the once despised merchant!—Summoning, however, all her pride to her aid, she wished them a pleasant journey.

She had returned into the house with them, and Mr. Elton, senior, made his parting bow in return for her kind wish, and walked out of the room; George loitered a second or two behind, to catch an inarticulate wish that they might meet in England, to press a beautiful hand with no small degree of fervour to his lips, and to re-echo her

her last speech, notwithstanding his heart was in Madame de Valcerné's possession ;— he then followed his grandfather, who was waiting for him in the passage, and they proceeded to their other friends, who were all very sorry, very much astonished, and so forth ; but Lord Valmont cordially invited George to visit him in London, and entreated, as they were going to Lausanne, they would desire the master of the Golden Lion to supply all Mr. Mackenzie's wants in his name, and he would settle with him upon his return.

Mr. Elton, senior, freely told him they were going purposely to endeavour to serve that gentleman, with whose family they were sufficiently acquainted to make it almost their duty to see he was provided with every requisite in such a situation.

“ Then merely present him my good wishes, my generous friend, and tell him that I have this very day wrote an exact account

count of the manner in which he was left by Lord John Villars, to the Duke of Northington ; which I thought my duty, as it will prevent any misrepresentations of the affair from injuring him in his Grace's esteem."

" Your Lordship has been doing him a much greater service than would have been in our power," rejoined Elton, " and we thank you in the name of the invalid ; and can only say, should your Lordship ever cross Clapham Common, and will take the trouble to enquire for Mark Elton's house, in that vicinity, you will do both my grandson and me a very great favour."

The Earl promised to look in upon them often, and they parted with mutual regret on all sides ; and in less than an hour the Eltons were upon their fresh-water voyage, which proved exceedingly pleasant. They reached Lausanne between seven and eight, and took up their quarters at the Golden Lion.

Their

Their first enquiries were concerning Mackenzie ; he was considerably worse, they learned, from having been (during a short interval of reason) abruptly informed of his pupil's departure ; and the physician, who continued to attend him, had declared him in imminent danger.

“ Then let more advice be called in,” said Elton. “ Has he a nurse ?” with various other equally benevolent orders and questions, when he found he had not been absolutely neglected, though the zeal of mine host and hostess had considerably abated since the departure of Lord John and his suite.

They were now particularly eager to display their humanity ; the first medical men the town afforded soon made their appearance, and accompanied by the Mr. Eltons, proceeded to the chamber of the invalid, whom they now pronounced in a very high fever, but gave some hopes that, with proper care, he might recover.

George determined to pass the night by his bed-side, unknown to Mr. Elton, who meant his valet should sit up in the sick room, and had the satisfaction to find a visible amendment in his patient before morning; his delirium abated, and his astonished looks convinced George he was sensible that he was surrounded by strangers. He therefore told him that the Earl of Valmont, a particular friend of the Duke of Northington's, having heard by mere accident of his situation, as he could not leave Evian himself, had sent him, as his representative, to procure him every comfort and assistance Lausanne afforded, and to quiet his mind respecting the unpardonable step his pupil had taken, as he had wrote the Duke word where he was gone, and where he had left him, and in what condition; for the unfeeling youth had put several young Englishmen into his confidence previous to his departure.

Mackenzie

Mackenzie endeavoured to express his gratitude, but was not permitted to speak ; and owing to the care and tenderness with which he was treated, was very soon in a state of convalescence, and at the end of a week, able to leave his bed.

Mr. Elton, or George, were his constant companions, and their servants devoted to his orders. Such treatment made a very deep impression upon the grateful mind of John Mackenzie, who bore a strong resemblance to George's favourite Mary, both in point of figure and disposition.

The late Lord Everly, whom he had accompanied to Lisbon, had left him an annuity of a hundred a year, which was by no means sufficient to support the character of a gentleman in any country ;—he was therefore, much against his will, forced to join his father at Paris ; but found it so disagreeable, that he determined to make any shifts rather than continue to reside with his
parents,

parents, as his mother was continually reproaching him for the bad use he made of his time, declaring if he had had three grains of sense, he might have got a thousand a year out of the old Earl, instead of his paltry hundred; but she foresaw, with his fine moral principles, and refined sentiments, he would never make a fortune.

She had nae patience to hear a cheild of her's say he would nae flatter the vices of the great. Wealthy fules might talk sitch nonsense; but for he, Johnny Mackenzie, wha would nae have kenned his letters if Mr. Mackenzie and she had been troubled with ony of his scruples—he to talk of his spirit and his honour—hoot awa, it made her sick!

As her doctrines had the same effect upon Johnny, he returned to England, where he was of infinite use to the present Lord Everly, in settling his late brother's affairs; and not contented with making him

him a very handsome acknowledgment, that Nobleman recommended him to the notice of the Duke of Northington, who sent him abroad, as has been already related, with his youngest son. This simple story, without making any reflections upon his parents, he told the Mr. Eltons, whom he protested had saved his life; and, much as he thought himself indebted to the Earl of Valmont, he conceived himself infinitely more so to their humane benevolence; and as he meant, as soon as he could consistently with the engagements he had entered into with the Duke, return to England, he should feel himself particularly happy in being permitted to cultivate such valuable acquaintance.

Elton, in reply, desired him, whenever it suited him, to make either his town or country-house his home; and when he took leave of his new acquaintance, presented him with four rouleaus of fifty guineas each, in the Earl of Valmont's name; who understanding,

standing, he told him, that Lord John had made free with their letters of credit, thought he might find it difficult, or at least attended with delay, to raise money in Switzerland.

Mackenzie was astonished at this excess of generosity in the Earl, and expressed his gratitude for the kind concern he evidently took in his affairs, with the utmost feeling and respect; assuring him that he felt himself still more obliged to his Lordship for having recommended him to the notice of such kind friends.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

MR. ELTON and his grandson spent a week at Mr. Villaret's upon their return to Geneva, and, had they listened to their friendly host, would have extended their visit to a month; but the day before the one fixed for their departure, they were surprised by the appearance of Lord Valmont, who informed them that he had rode over to Geneva on purpose to abuse them for the unwarrantable use they had made of his name, which he had discovered upon his return to Lausanne, through the grateful Mackenzie; and declared he would revenge himself by relieving the first Englishman he met

met with in any sort of distress, during his travels, in their name; and they should be put to the blush, as he had been, by receiving praises so little his due.

He then proceeded to tell them that Mackenzie was upon his road to Venice; and that one part of his errand was to deliver a letter from that worthy fellow, who had gained his esteem by the sensibility he displayed when he learned how much more than he expected he was indebted to the Mr. Eltons; to the youngest of whom he had ventured to send a Newfoundland puppy which he had heard him admire at Laufanne, and which had accidentally become at his disposal—

“ But the letter would have told you that,” said his Lordship, “ and my groom has delivered the dog to the care of your’s. He is the symbol of gratitude, therefore, as I told Mackenzie, the most proper present he could make.”

The

The Earl then produced Mackenzie's letter, which added considerably to the prepossession George and Elton already felt in his favour; the latter determined, upon his return to England, to exert all his interest to procure him some genteel situation, which might enable him to enjoy a few more comforts than he at present could boast.

The Earl spent the day with them, and among other news, told them the Monteiths had left Evian, and were gone, he understood, upon a visit to Count de —, formerly Ambassador at the Court of Great Britain.

“ The town grew intolerably dull, Lady Juliana told me when I last saw her; and I acquiesced in her opinion, as I attributed her *ennui*, like my own, to your departure. I don't mean to flatter your vanity, Elton, but I am convinced you have done Lord Dunraven, unintentionally, a very great injury; for should he obtain her Ladyship's hand,

hand, he will never possess her heart—that has been in your keeping these five weeks ; but you are a strange, blind, insensible mortal !”

“ I don’t chuse to contradict your Lordship, else——”

“ Why else,” interrupted the Earl ; “ you would tell me, and I should credit your assertion, that a man may neither be blind nor insensible, and yet not wear Lady Juliana Valtravers’s chains—*ecce signum* ;—but had she displayed half the partiality in my favour she did in your’s, I would have led her to the altar, spite of family arrangements.—Yet, upon my honour, I would never advise any untitled friend to marry a titled wife ; they are almost sure to prove domestic plagues.”

Mr. Elton, senior, was of his Lordship’s opinion ; but George defended the titled dames, assuring them he had known some who would have made any man happy.

“ Since you speak in the plural, George,” rejoined the Earl, “ do give me a recommendation to one of these paragons?—I must look out for a wife soon, and among the titled ladies ; for I don’t want money. Hitherto none have ever fallen under my observation, into whose keeping I should like to entrust either my honour or my happiness.”

“ Then I have been more fortunate than your Lordship,” replied George ; “ but I certainly ought to have spoke in the singular ; for you are a much better judge than I can be of Lady Juliana Valtravers’s disposition.”

“ Whose case is quite hopeless, I find,” cried his Lordship ; “ however I hope, some time or other, you will introduce me to this peerless fair.”

“ I sincerely wish it may ever be in my power, my Lord,” he replied.

His Lordship changed the conversation, and they parted better friends than ever, each

each protesting they should look forward to their next meeting with infinite pleasure.

Next morning, Elton and George set out for Lyons, where they made but a short stay, owing to the then convulsed state of France.

George's impatience to see the friend of his infancy and youth, the excellent Principal Douglas, increased as he approached Paris; though he often reflected upon the surprising change that had taken place in the French Government with real dread, yet he considered the Principal was not at a time of life to meddle in politics, and as yet there had been but few emigrations.—Admitting he had not fallen a sacrifice to the late lawless mobs, his advanced age made it very probable he might have been long since gathered to his forefathers.

His mind was thus fluctuating between hope and fear, when the carriage stopped

at a large hotel in the Fauxbourg St. Germain, where Mr. Elton had before lodged, on his road to Nice; and the moment George alighted, he set out on foot for the Scotch College.

As the gates were still open, he reached the last well-known door that led into the Principal's private apartment, without meeting a single soul he knew, and was upon the point of rushing in, when a servant came out, who seemed astonished to perceive an unannounced stranger so near him, and instantly said, holding the door in his hand, which he was going to close after him—

“Who do you want, Sir?”

“Principal Douglas,” replied George, fixing his eyes upon the man's face.

“Pray walk in, Sir; my master is at home, and alone,” opening the door.

Upon leaving the Principal exclaim, as he advanced—“Surely I am not deceived—

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I know that voice," George sprang forwards, and found his best friend's arms expanded to receive him; who, while he pressed him to his bosom, said—

"Welcome, a thousand times, my best beloved boy!—Where have you been since you left Martinico, and what has befallen you?—The villain who caused you to be carried off, is no more; his death has almost reconciled me to our Revolution, for he is one of the many victims that have bled at the shrine of Anarchy!"

George having, in his turn, expressed the joy he felt, enquired whether Madame de Valcarné knew to whom he was indebted for his late unpleasant voyage?

"She has not long been informed that Count du Breuil, your rival in her good graces, planned the scheme which unfortunately succeeded but too well. That

amiable woman knows you have escaped from his vile agents with your life."

"I wrote to her and the Marquis de Fierval the moment I had it in my power to dispatch my letters with any degree of safety, and with any likelihood of their reaching Martinico."

"You were perfectly right—you could not be too expeditious in setting their minds at ease;—but do sit down;—you are but just arrived in Paris, I presume?—Which will you have, a dish of tea, or a glass of wine?"

George preferred the former, which was immediately ordered; and while it was preparing, he gave the Principal a succinct account of his adventures, since he allowed himself to become the dupe of Count du Breuil's plots.

"The Lord be praised for all things!" exclaimed the worthy man, when he concluded; "but why did not you bring this kind grandfather

father of your's with you.—I long to be introduced to him ; and you must know any friend of your's would meet with a cordial welcome."

" Mr. Elton is not less impatient to see you, my dear Sir ; but I had so many questions to ask you, and so many things to talk over, that I wished to have you all to myself this evening."

The old gentleman smiled, and began to make the tea, declaring he had almost given up all thoughts of ever seeing him again.

" But pray, my dear Sir," said the impatient George, " to what was my departure from Martinico generally attributed?—What were Madame de Valcarné's thoughts—and how was it discovered that Count du Breuil was the contriver of the iniquitous plan ?"

" I must take rather a longer time to resolve these three questions," answered the old gentleman, " than you seem inclined to

allow me. Not to keep you in suspense, your strange disappearance was immediately supposed to originate in some secret enemy. The Marquis de Fierval wrote the Count de St. Mars, and me, a very incoherent account of the distressing event, and expressed his fears that Madame de Valcarné would not survive the dreadful shock, as she was firmly convinced you had been made away with. The Count du Breuil was the only person in the island who affected to believe you had left Martinico to avoid fulfilling your engagements; this, as the Marquis observed, was the mere subterfuge of a narrow mind, to lower you in the eyes of the woman who had refused to listen to his suit; and, I need not tell you, made no impression upon any of your friends, who took every means which could be devised to discover whither, and with whom you were gone. As for the Count and me, we could only weary ourselves with afflicting conjectures concerning your fate;—if you ever returned to Europe, we were convinced that we should either

would see,

see, or hear from you ; and thus near sixteen months expired, and I believe all your friends began to think their first fears concerning you were realized.—Poor Madame de Valcarné ! But I won't expatiate upon her sufferings—ere this, I trust she has received your letter ; but believe me, my dear George, no one can conceive what she has undergone upon your account.—I will shew you some of her letters—not to-night though remember.—So to proceed with my story :—At the commencement of our wonderful Revolution, few men were perhaps more deservedly unpopular than the Count du Breuil, and as soon as the present levelling principles were broached in the colonies, his numerous enemies seized the favourable opportunity to revenge themselves for his former acts of petty tyranny. He was hurried to prison, tried, and condemned by the mob, who were proceeding to execute their sentence in their usual summary way, but, through the interposition of the Marquis de Fierval, he was allowed a short

respite to prepare for eternity ; when, to the horror of all who heard him, he confessed he had, by an enormous bribe, induced the Captain of an American vessel to decoy you on board, and then convey you in irons to the most distant port, of what nation it mattered not, where he could set you on shore with safety to himself ; acknowledging he had been led to the perpetration of this wicked deed, in hopes he should be able to console Madame de Valcarné for what he meant should appear your voluntary defection ; but solemnly declared he had never enjoyed a moment's peace since, nor could he give them the least information concerning you. He had merely received two letters from his rascally agent, who had threatened in both to land you again in Martinico, and declare why he spirited you away, if he did not comply with his exorbitant demands for money ;—he therefore hoped that you were still alive, and that Madame de Valcarné would pronounce his pardon before he submitted to the rigour of popular justice.

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The Marquis declared he ought to look upon his impending fate as a just retribution for his enormous guilt and horrid perfidy; and wondered how he dared to hope for the injured Madame de Valcarné's forgiveness, since he had put it out of his own, and your friend's power to rescue you from the hands of the wretches who had taken you in charge. However, the abject being humbled himself so much, and professed such sorrow for the past, that the Marquis consented to mention his petition to the unfortunate Baronne; but a succession of fainting fits, the consequence of his communication, though made with the utmost precaution, effectually prevented her from even seeing the vile Count, who expiated his sins upon a scaffold soon after. Madame de Valcarné, after a time, grew rather more resigned to what she termed her irreparable loss, firmly convinced you had fallen a martyr to the wicked Count's machinations. However, in case you survived the dreadful treatment you must have met with, she has made me some very large

remittances, which I have by her orders placed, by means of my banker, in the British funds in your name ; as she presumed that I should be among the first people you would seek after, should you ever obtain your liberty ; and I had several letters for you, which I have, through motives of prudence, also consigned to the care of an old friend of mine in London.—To-morrow you shall see all those addressed to myself.—These are troublesome times, and people can't be too cautious.—*A-propos*, though your meeting with Mr. Elton has solved the riddle, an Englishman, whose manners and appearance bespoke him a gentleman, waited upon me about a year since, to make very particular enquiries respecting you ; he seemed perfectly versed in your family history, and was evidently very much disappointed, and even hurt, to find it was not in my power to inform him where you were, or even if you still existed. He was some friend of your grandfather's, I presume ; he did men-

tion his name, but it has really escaped my memory."

"It can be of no signification, my dear Sir," replied George; "the enquiry undoubtedly originated in Mr. Elton, whose numerous friends and acquaintance were all anxious to discover me, out of regard to him; and this gentleman might have learned from some of my fellow-students that I was for many years under your care. But you don't know what a load of anxiety your recital has removed from my mind.—But how was Madame de Valcarné when you last heard from Martinico?"

"I trust she is much better ere this; so pray let us wave all disagreeable retrospections."

"I have half a mind to sail for the West Indies before I proceed to England."

"You would not surely be so mad!—To know that you are living, and in good health, must calm all her fears; and she will doubtless inform you what her future plans are, which your arrival would most probably derange.

derange. Besides, you certainly would not be so ungrateful to Mr. Elton;—depend upon it you will find answers to your late letters in London; and I am certain that Madame de Valcarné would be the first to condemn you, were you to act as you proposed.”

“ I have done, my kind monitor—I positively spoke unthinkingly; for was Mr. Elton really my grandfather, I could not love and respect him more.—But pray how is the Count de St. Mars?”

“ He left Paris almost immediately after the destruction of the Bastile, and soon after the kingdom; where he has bent his steps I can’t inform you—most likely to Germany. He was too loyal a subject for these times; but we will not enter into politics.”

“ No, my dear Sir; though I must condemn this new system, since it has made an exile of such a man.—But are the Mackenzies still at Paris?”

“ No, they have been in England near two years; they set off without making a
single

single enquiry concerning you, or even taking leave of me ;—only the gentle Mary informed me that they were going, and entreated I would present her kindest remembrance to my *protégée*. I had no opportunity to answer her letter ; so she left Paris in ignorance of the unfortunate event which had, as I then thought, blasted all your fair prospects in this world.—I have since heard, from the friend to whom I consigned your letters, that Mackenzie is rising rapidly in his profession, and that he lives in a far more expensive style in London than he did at Paris, has a large house in Leicester Square, and has had the honour of being employed by some of the first Nobility. But poor Mary was in a very bad state of health, Mr. Murray informed me when he wrote last. God forgive me, if I judge Mackenzie wrongfully ! but I am afraid he now shines at your expence ;—we will talk that matter over another time, for here comes supper.”

George

George had never once reflected upon the hour—as he knew he should not keep Mr. Elton waiting, he sat down with the Principal ; and, between eleven and twelve, after promising to bring the former to dine at the Scotch College the next day, he took leave of his first patron for the night.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIII.

MR. ELTON was not gone to bed when he returned, and very happy to learn that Principal Douglas was still alive, and that the detested contriver of his grandson's sufferings had made such an ignominious exit. —The populace had certainly acted right in that instance;—as to the Mackenzies, notwithstanding the regard he felt for their eldest son, he was very much inclined to call them to an account respecting their guardianship.

George remonstrated; he had given a receipt in full of all demands;—besides, such
a scru-

a scrutiny might make him an object of idle curiosity, and bring on enquiries which would be very repugnant to his feelings.

Mr. Elton gave up the point, and only hoped that they would be tormented with a few of those qualms of conscience which had so severely galled the execrable Count du Breuil; then hoping, since all his doubts and fears respecting his Martinico friends were thus happily relieved, George would enjoy a good repose, they retired to their respective apartments.

Principal Douglas had still so many things to say to his pupil, and longed so much to be introduced to his grandfather, that he was at their hotel before they had done breakfast, and was as intimate with the worthy Elton in five minutes, as if they had been acquaintance of forty years standing.—The Principal delivered up his trust, that is, gave George Bank receipts for the various sums he had placed in the Stocks in his name.

“ I

“ I merely consider myself as a trustee for Madame de Valcarné,” said George, as he looked over the papers ; “ for I should despise myself more than words can express, were I to take advantage of her generosity. As her husband, and I am still vain enough to aspire to that title, I should have thought myself justified in accepting some part of her property ; but at present I can have no claim upon her fortune.”

“ That is a point you must settle with the Lady, George,” said Elton ; “ but I trust she will soon give you a legal claim to what I am sure you would hurt her very much in refusing.—Come, suppose we take a drive about Paris ; though I can’t say it has altered for the better, in my opinion, since I was last here.”

The Principal and George readily agreed to the proposal, and spent that, and several succeeding days in each other’s company ; and when they talked of setting off, Elton gave the Principal a hearty invitation to
become

become his guest, should he find it expedient to leave France. That gentleman accompanied them as far as St. Germain's on the road to Dieppe, from whence they meant to cross to Brighthelmston; and after promising to renew his long interrupted correspondence with George, returned to Paris, while they pursued their journey.

It was now the beginning of November, and not only the roads, but the weather was unusually bad for the season. Our travellers, notwithstanding, reached Dieppe without any accident, and learned that there was a packet in port ready to put to sea; but the wind was very unfavourable, and continued so for three days, which they spent at one of the worst houses for the accommodation of travellers, Elton declared, that was ever dignified by the name of an inn; and was never more pleased than when summoned on board the vessel destined to convey them to Great Britain.

They

They set sail about three o'clock in the afternoon, and as there was a very strong breeze at sea, came to an anchorage in Brighthelmstone Bay between one and two o'clock in the morning, a few hours sooner than he had expected, the Captain observed; but as all was safe, why it was mighty well.

It was bitterly cold, and the passengers were all anxious to get on shore; lights were hung out as signals for boats to come off to the ship, but the night had been so severe, that there was no one upon the look out for their arrival: and it was absolutely contrary to the established rules, to land the passengers in the boats belonging to the ship. This the Captain urged, in reply to the entreaties made him to that purport. But Mr. Elton was an invalid, and of established character, well known even to Ministers, therefore he should run no risk in taking him and his grandson on shore; and as he was going thither himself, why those gentlemen

tle men were heartily welcome to accompany him.

They readily accepted his offer, and though conscious that it originated in an interested motive, still they gave him credit for thus contriving to oblige them, without putting it in the power of the other passengers to complain. George's dog, who was become a prodigious favourite, did not chuse to be left behind; therefore jumped overboard, and swam by the side of the boat to the shore.

The moment they were upon *terra firma*, Elton exclaimed—

“ God be praised, I am once more in Old England!—Welcome to Great Britain, my dear fellow!—you will now find, by experience, the difference between a French and an English inn.—Our's is the country for travelling, after all—is it not, Captain?”

“ It

“ It is indeed, Sir ; which house do you mean to go to ? ”

“ Oh the first, the inn I always use.— This is the most fashionable water-drinking place in England, George ; but this is no time to admire its beauties.”

George agreed it was not a very favourable light, and they hastened forward to the house, which he expected to find little inferior to a palace, from Elton's account of it. The outside struck him as being very handsome ; the Captain knocked, while Elton told George, who expressed his fears that every body was in bed, there was always somebody up at these large houses, and a good fire, which they should both enjoy. But even a second knock, much more violent than the first, obtained no notice.

“ They are dead asleep to be sure,” cried Elton, assisting the Captain to rouse them ; still the same silence prevailed.

Elton

Elton lost all patience, and was tempted to retract all he had said in praise of English inns, when a sash above their heads was opened, and a man demanded in a surly impudent tone—

“ Who is there ?”

“ Why I thought you, and all your folks were dead, landlord,” cried the Captain ; “ here are two gentlemen, just landed, who want admittance.”

He was hardly allowed to finish his sentence, before the fellow, in a still more impudent tone, called out—“ I have no room,” and pulled down the sash with such violence, as he ceased speaking, as made the very house shake.

“ Well,” exclaimed Elton, “ I was never before refused admittance at an inn.—To spend my breath now would be very useless—in the morning I will return you my thanks, Mr. Landlord !”

“ Was

VOL.

“ Was there ever such an impudent scoundrel,” said the Captain ; “ he deserves to have his house knocked about his ears.”

“ Had it been the Brighton season,” rejoined Elton, “ I might have credited his assertion ; but, considering the time of year, I much question whether he has three people in his house.—Can you recommend us to any other, Captain ?”

“ There are several more inns in the town, Sir,” he replied ; “ we must pass a small one on our road to my house, where I shall be very happy to afford you every accommodation in my power, if our application should prove as unsuccessful there, as it has here.”

“ You are very obliging, Captain,” said Elton ; “ but let us hope that some of the Brighton publicans know their own interest better than this insolent fellow, who can be very polite I have frequently experienced, and I have tried to recommend him among my friends ;—but no matter.”

This passed as they were retracing their steps, and as they walked pretty fast, they soon reached the inn the Captain had mentioned, and perceived a light in a one pair of stairs room, nearly over the door.

“Somebody is up, however,” said the Captain, knocking at the door while he spoke.

Immediately a corner of the window-curtain was put by in the room from whence the light proceeded, and a young lady, with a book in her hand, looked down; she was not able to see any one distinctly, but as she heard different voices, she instantly stepped back, and by the shade of the light it was easy to distinguish that she was not alone.

“I hope we shall be more fortunate here,” said Elton, looking at George, whose eyes seemed rivetted upon the window, and who, in answer to his speech, exclaimed—

“It

“ It can’t be ! ”

Before Elton could ask an explanation, the fash was thrown up by a servant girl, who called out—

“ Who is there ? ”

The Captain answered, and told her to be handy, if the house was not full.

“ Hush ! hush ! ” cried the girl, “ here is a lady very ill in this room—I am coming down directly ; ” and in a short time they heard her unbolting and unlocking the door.

“ Shew us into a room where there is a good fire,” cried Elton as he entered ; “ the kitchen, if you have no other at liberty—any where, so we can but warm ourselves.”

“ Lord, Sir, we have not a fire in the house, except in the sick lady’s room—why ’tis past two o’clock in the morning ! ”

"Then light one in the best bed-chamber you have got unoccupied," replied Elton.

"We have not got one to spare that has a fire-place, Sir ; all our best rooms are full."

The Captain had taken leave of them at the door, therefore they had no other resource than to put up with these repeated disappointments with patience ; and George said he thought that they had better go to bed directly ; they should soon be warm if they laid down between the blankets.

"Very true," Elton replied ; "but a little mulled wine would be of infinite service to us, and the girl can heat that by the sick lady's fire."

"Oh yes, Sir, for she is a mortal civil body ; but I han't got no wine to warm."

"Well, but you can call your master, or a waiter, I suppose ?" said Elton.

"As for the waiter, Sir, he han't got the keys of the cellar no more than me ; and as for master, why he would twist my neck round,

round, as he often threatens. However I will try what I can do for you, gentlemen; but I must leave you in the dark, for I can't get at a morsel more candle," and away she ran.

"We could not have been much worse off had we landed on the other, instead of this side of the water," said Elton; "you must have formed a very high opinion of England, George.—I wish to God we had accepted the Captain's offer!"

George placed all their misfortunes to the unseasonable hour; and Elton declared he would call the master himself, if the girl did not bring them something to eat and drink.

In about ten minutes she returned with some warm wine and a plate of biscuits, which she had begged for them, she said, of the sick lady's daughter, who was one of the best-tempered young persons she had ever feed.

"She came to the window when the Captain knocked, did she not?" said George.

"Yes, Sir; and I am sure, for a French body, she is mortal handsome.—Her mother has runned away from there—though she might as well have staid, for the time she has to live.—God, he knows, howsomnever, to be sure it is better to die in one's bed than to be killed!"

"But pray what is her name?" said George, very anxiously.

"How many times has Miss made me try to speak it! but I can't remember it now if it was to save my soul.—But the candle is almost out, so you must make haste, gentlemen, or you will be forced to go to bed in the dark."

"Then shew us up stairs," said Elton, "and present our thanks to the young lady, and tell her we hope she will allow us to repeat them in person before we leave Brighton. I feel, somehow, interested about her. But come, child."

The

The girl took the candle, saying to George—

“ You had better stop here, Sir, till I come down again ; for you must go up another pair of stairs to your room.”

He chose, however, to accompany his grandfather, and assist him to undress. The girl waited at the door till he came out again with the light, and then conducted him, as she had promised, to the foot of another staircase, which she desired he would ascend very softly, as they must pass the sick lady's door ; but unfortunately, just as she reached the first landing, she trod upon her apron, and let her candle fall.

“ How unlucky ! ” she cried ; but desired him to stand still while she went, and lit it in the lady's room.—They were close to her door ; and the glimpse George had caught of the young lady's face, made him very curious to obtain a better view ;—there was

a possibility that she was the person she had reminded him of, and at all events he was determined to be satisfied before he left Brighton. The girl opened the door very cautiously, and closed it after her; but as she came out again, he heard somebody from within desire her to come in again before she went to bed.

The voice was familiar to him—his heart beat high—still he doubted the evidence of his ears, and exclaimed, as he had done before—

“It can’t be!”

“What can’t be, Sir?” said the astonished chamber-maid.

“Nothing, my girl,” following her up stairs, conscious that this was not a time of night to request an audience of ladies, one of whom was very ill; but the moment he reached his bed-chamber, he began once more to question the girl concerning the foreigners.

Her

Her answers increased his curiosity so much, that he was determined to be satisfied before he went to rest, convinced he should not sleep while he remained in this doubtful suspense ; he therefore wrote with his pencil upon the cover of a letter which he had in his pocket :—

“ If the ladies to whom these lines are addressed, were ever acquainted with a person of the name of Harcourt, he should esteem it a particular favour to be permitted to pay his respects to them ; if not to-night, as early as they can make it convenient to receive him in the morning.”

He gave this note to the girl, and desired she would carry it to the young lady. If she was the person he suspected, she would be happy to find that she had so intimate a friend so near ; and if they were strangers to him, what he had written could not give them offence. This he told the girl upon her hesitating to deliver his missive ; he soon

overruled her scruples, and had the satisfaction to see her walk down stairs.

He followed her to the head of the stairs, and saw her enter the sick room. Profound silence prevailed for a few seconds, when he heard the person, whose voice he thought he recognized, exclaim in accents of rapture—

“ Oh mon Dieu ! mon Dieu ! ma chere Maman ! ”

Unconscious of what he did, George hastened down to the door, which the girl had left upon the jar, just in time to hear uttered in a plaintive tone—

“ What transports my child ?—From whence comes the note you have in your hand ? ”

“ Oh Mama ! ” Tears of joy prevented her from proceeding.

“ Give me the paper,” cried the invalid, “ and hold the candle ! ”

She was obeyed, and almost instantaneously said—

“ My God, I thank thee ! Thou hast heard my prayers—I shall now resign my breath without a murmur !—Let me see him, Albertine.—I know this is his writing.”

George's late doubts were now all vanished, though his agitation very much increased, as he was now certain that the speaker was the woman to whom his heart had been so long devoted—the truly amiable Baronne de Valcarné, and her companion her lively daughter, the youthful Albertine. In his joyful ecstasy he put his hand upon the lock of the door, but delicacy prevented him from giving way to his first impulse ; he stepped back, anxiously waiting for the expected summons ;—no longer in need of a fire, a warm glow had succeeded his late chillness, his pulse beat quick, and every nerve seemed to participate in his rapture.

After another short silence, he heard the interesting invalid say—

“ I am better now.—Go and seek him, my child.—No, stop, raise my pillows first !”

Albertine was in too great haste to execute the first order, to attend to the second ; she flew to the door, followed by the girl, saying—

“ Lead me to him, to the gentleman who sent the note,” hastening forward before her guide, and found herself in the arms of the object of her search the instant she was out of the room.

Excess of joy is, undoubtedly, as painful for the moment as excess of grief ; a violent flood of tears relieved her bursting heart. The servant, neither expecting that George was so near, nor prepared for such a meeting, stepped so far back in the passage that she must have fallen down the stairs, if she had

had not caught hold of the banisters. The bustle she made roused Albertine, who raising her streaming eyes, said—

“ Oh my dear friend, are we thus blessed ! —my poor mother will expire with joy, I am afraid ; but do come in,” leading him to the bedside, and undrawing the curtains, which discovered to his view the woman he had so fervently adored, pale, and almost lifeless to appearance ; her fine eyes were languid and heavy, and every feature participated in the sad change. She put out her hand as he advanced, while a faint smile irradiated her woeworn countenance.

“ Two years have elapsed this very evening, my dear Harcourt, since our cruel separation, which I hardly wished to survive. —Oh what reason you have had to deplore my fatal partiality !”

“ I entreat, my amiable friend, we may only look forward* ; though to find you thus indisposed, greatly damps my present felicity,
yet

yet I rejoice, more than I can express, to see you in England," pressing her trembling hand to his lips; when, to his infinite terror, he felt it cold and lifeless, and perceived that the overjoyed invalid had fainted upon her pillow.

Albertine was by no means so much alarmed; she entreated him to compose his spirits, while she applied the usual remedies, and assured him that her mother would soon recover. The joyful surprise had proved too much for her, and she was become subject to these fits.

In less than ten minutes Madame de Valcarné verified her predictions, and seemed flattered by George's visible anxiety. He enquired what advice they had had?—The first the town afforded, Albertine assured him, and the gentlemen had all declared that they would be answerable for her mother's recovery if she followed their prescriptions;

scriptions ; but impatience to pursue her journey had retarded her cure.

“ I believe it has,” rejoined the Baronne ;
“ but since I have once more seen the person I expected to find in London, I hope I shall bear my confinement with more patience than I have hitherto done.—How well you look, my dear Harcourt, to what I dared to expect ! for what has not that most execrable of all villains, the Count du Breuil, made us both suffer !—Both, do I say—what have my sufferings been when compared with your’s !—Can you conceive my transports when I received your letter from Moudon ?—Yes, the heart that dictated that epistle, can judge what my feelings were !—How I blessed that excellent grandfather of your’s !—but for his kind enquiries, what might have become of you, landed as you were in such a distant clime !—But have you seen Principal Douglas ? You mentioned your intention of paying him a visit.”

George

George briefly related his adventures since his departure from Moudon; and then, with unaffected sincerity, renewed his former suit. She smiled at his earnestness, and in reply said—

“ There was a time, my dear Harcourt, when I looked forward to our union with the agreeable certainty of contributing to your happiness; but I dare no longer indulge that pleasing idea;—reduced to the mere shadow of my former self, should I recover my health, my small pretensions to beauty are all fled, and my prospects are strangely altered;—so are your’s, my beloved George.—But I see I pain your generous heart;—permit me for the present to wave so delicate a subject, and tell me how you came to Brighton?—I did intend dispatching an express to London to-morrow, to request your company, finding myself so unable to pursue my journey.”

George related the trivial event to which they owed the pleasure they enjoyed, adding,

ing, that had they been taken in at the great inn, he should indubitably have left Brighton without seeing her, as he was all impatience to reach London, where he hoped to find letters from Martinico.

“ How thankful I ought to be ! ” said the invalid ; “ Fortune stood my friend this evening. I had long determined to visit England ere your welcome packet arrived, and had in consequence disposed of the chief part of my estates, and at different times sent over the produce to be placed in your funds, through the means of a trusty agent. Martinico, after your departure, became hateful to me ; and the Revolution, which brought to light the perfidy of that vilest of all vile beings that ever disgraced a human form, made me resolve to seek a refuge in Great Britain as soon as I could do it with prudence. I therefore continued to turn my property into money, part of which I sent to Principal Douglas, for whose use I need not add ; indeed a latent hope that
you

you would benefit by my care, made me more attentive than I should otherwise have been, in my weak dejected state, to money matters : and upon the whole I have been very fortunate ; though my income will of necessity be considerably reduced. But I have found the inefficiency of riches.— How gladly would I have parted with every farthing I possessed, to procure your liberty ! The receipt of your letter made me resolve to bring my answer in person, and you find I have got thus far on my journey.”

She would have entered into several more details, but George perceiving her very much fatigued, took his leave, entreating Albertine would let him know the moment her mother was awake in the morning.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIV.

THIS, in many respects, unexpected meeting totally banished sleep from Harcourt's, or rather Elton's, pillow : he flattered himself that she would soon recover, and determined to convince her, now he had it so much in his power, of the disinterestedness of his regard. To renew his former engagements was a matter of course ; but he meant to insist upon her settling her own fortune upon her daughter at her death ;—while she lived, she had a right to enjoy her revenue, and he meant she should do so. All he would accept should be the twenty thousand pounds now standing in his name in the Three
Per

Per Cents.—Albertine should not have it to say that her mother's partiality in his favour had deprived her of what he looked upon as her right. He had consented to have his former marriage settlements drawn agreeably to Madame de Valcarné's directions; but had previously declared to the Marquis de Fierval that he should add a clause, by which he intended to have made over whatever she might have settled upon him, to her daughter at his death. As her husband, he should have thought himself entitled to the life-interest; but as Mr. Elton's heir, the case was altered, and he should convince the generous Baronne that it was her heart, not her riches, he coveted.

Eager to consult his kind friend, he rose the moment he heard people moving in the house, that he might secure a room for his reception, and see there was a good fire; but found that he need not have been so diligent.

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Their servants, who were landed about seven o'clock, had come in search of them, and their appearance had put the little inn quite in a bustle. The landlord, who was just up, gave orders for the best parlour to be prepared, a good fire made, with every other *et cetera*; and rated the chambermaid very severely for not having called him in the night. She pleaded his general orders; he called her a stupid fool, who could not distinguish guests of such consequence from country-riders: however the harm was done, and he had only to make a thousand excuses to George the moment he came down, and to lay all the blame upon his ignorant maid.

Mr. Elton joined them before he had concluded, and readily accepted his apology. As soon as they had got rid of him, George entered upon his story. The good man was very happy that they had arrived so *a-propos*, as he thought his grandson's presence would contribute, more than any medicine, to the invalid's

invalid's recovery ; and, if she could be removed with safety, they would look out for a house after they had seen her. They wondered she was so unattended, but supposed she thought French West India servants would be very troublesome in England.

Mr. Elton's valet came in with their breakfast, to receive his master's orders, who enquired how he found them out ?

" We went to the inn you always used, Sir ; the landlord was very glad to see us, but was quite astonished when we asked after you ; till he recollected having been disturbed, and declared, had he known who it was, he would have given up his own bed rather than you should have been obliged to go any where else, and desired me to make his excuses."

" Was the fellow's house full, as he told us ?"

" I saw no signs of company, Sir."

" Then

“ Then you may tell him that I will never expose myself to his insults again ;—depend upon it he shall never have the pleasure of refusing me, or any of my friends, admittance again. But go and get the baggage on shore as soon as you can ; a change of linen will be a luxury to us both.”

The servant retired, and they resumed the conversation his entrance had broken in upon, and were debating many important points respecting future arrangements, when Albertine knocked at the door. George instantly rose, guessing who it was ; she seemed in very high spirits, considering her mother's situation, the old gentleman thought, but did not make the remark. After the usual introductory compliments, she said her mother had been too happy to sleep, and would be glad to see them as soon as convenient.

They only waited her permission, George replied, as both his grandfather and himself

self were anxious to make their personal enquiries after her health.

Elton entreated she would step forward to prepare the lady for their visit. The moment she was gone, George asked his grandfather what he thought of his intended daughter-in-law?

“Why, to be very honest, my dear fellow, she is rather too much of a French woman for my taste.—I like to see young people gay at proper times and seasons; but this young lady’s joy at seeing you, seems to have made her forget her mother’s illness. But don’t let me be censorious; she is a very fine girl, and, I dare say, possesses many amiable qualities;—so come along, for I am very impatient to see her mother.”

This was literally truth, for Elton thought it rather surprising that George should have disposed of his heart in favour of a woman of Madame de Valcarné’s age; and what
but

but a very strong prior attachment could have made him indifferent to the marked preference of Lady Juliana Valtravers !

The invalid was raised up in bed to receive them : her pallid cheeks were tinged with a glow of pleasure as they approached, and her eyes seemed to have recovered some of their former brilliancy. That she had been beautiful in the extreme, Elton was convinced ; and if she recovered her health, he was certain she would, notwithstanding her age, be infinitely handsomer than her daughter ; indeed there was not the slightest resemblance between them : prepared as he was to admire her, she far surpassed his expectation. The attachment she had so nobly evinced for his favourite George, was a sufficient recommendation to his favour, and from the moment he was introduced to her, he felt strongly interested in her welfare, and resolved to do all that laid in his power to contribute to her recovery and future felicity.

She received the old gentleman with a native ease and dignity which had never forsaken her during her severest trials, and as the natural friend and protector of the man she loved, far superior to any species of affectation; she acknowledged she found herself better, and rather hoped that she should yet bear the name so dear to her heart.

“ Yes, my dear George, to find I still retain the same place in your affection I did when you so nobly, so frankly confessed your sentiments to our joint friend, the amiable Madame de Fierval, has almost perfected my cure:—an enervating weakness is all that remains of my past complaints.”

“ Then let me hope that you will soon give me a legal right to become your head nurse,” replied the grateful Harcourt; “ but do you think you could bear the fatigue of a removal? for this is really a very ineligible situation for you; and I dare say we shall be able to procure a house, or lodgings, at no great distance from this inn.”

“ Then

“ Then I will trouble you to look out for me,” replied the invalid ; “ you must think it strange to find me without any female attendants, but to tell you the truth, I dared not let any of my household know that I was going never to return. One of the Marchioness de Fierval’s women, who wished to return to France, sailed with us from Martinico ; we left her at St. Maloes, where we landed, as I wished to see some friends who reside in that city, with whom we spent a few days : and I had thought of providing myself with a servant there, till I found such a spirit of independence now pervades the lower class of French ; I therefore altered my mind, certain that I should suit myself more to my satisfaction in England, as soon as I was able to look about me.”

Elton perfectly agreed with her ; and, as it grew late, he set out with George in search of a house large enough to accommodate them all, as their staying at Brighton till Madame de Valcarné was sufficiently recovered

vered to accompany them to town, was a matter of course.

They met with what they were in search of upon the Steine, and ordered it to be prepared for their immediate reception, and proper household servants to be engaged, as they meant to remove that evening, if the physician made no objections.

On their return they were overtaken by the polite landlord of the large inn, who, having bowed very respectfully to Mr. Elton, said—

“ I was told, Sir, by Mr. —, as I passed his house this moment, that you had taken it for a week certain; I hope——”

Elton made a full stop, and fixed his eyes upon the orator, who also stopped, and bowed the second time.

“ Well, Sir, what is it you hope?”

“ That if you want any thing in my way, you will permit me to serve you as usual ;— I have the same cook I have heard you praise, and defy any man to sell better wines ; my stabling is also very good, and very near the house you have taken.”

“ Considering how much you have got above your business, I am astonished that you should condescend to solicit my custom ; however, you may save your breath ; it is not worth my while to treat you as you richly deserve, since there are other inns in the town ; besides, though unintentionally, you have done me a very essential service. But depend upon it, while there is a bottle of wine, or a dinner to be had within twenty miles, I will not apply to you for either.”

The mortified fellow, who was no longer going their way, turned upon his heel, and left them to pursue their walk.

Elton said he was glad he had afforded him an opportunity, he should not have sought,

fought, to tell him his sentiments ; alledging, that people who, like him, lived by the public in general, could not be too indiscriminately polite.

As they entered their inn, they met the physician who attended Madame de Valcarné, in the passage, upon his return from visiting his patient. Particularly anxious to hear his opinion of her disorder, they requested him to walk into their parlour, and informed him of the measures they had been taking for her removal, provided such a step met his approbation.

“ Why really, gentlemen, this lady’s complaint is one of those which baffle the most skilful of my profession—her spirits are much more than equal to her strength. I am afraid her recovery is doubtful ; it is possible she may linger a short time longer—still, I own, she has every symptom of an approaching dissolution ;—fortunately she seems perfectly resigned to her fate.—Your
arrival.

arrival, gentlemen, has greatly contributed to tranquillize her mind: she fancied herself much better this morning, she has told me, but I am sorry to say, it was only fancy.— She now talks of making some alteration in her will, and has requested me to send her my solicitor, whom indeed I recommended: and I must candidly acknowledge, if she has any thing of importance to settle, it ought not to be delayed; nor should I advise her to think of removing till she has arranged all her worldly affairs to her satisfaction.”

Elton was exceedingly hurt, as he had really entertained great hopes of her recovery; but it would be almost impossible to define the feelings of George, conscious as he was, that love for him, and regret for his loss, had reduced Madame de Valcarné to her present extremity.

“And are there no hopes, Sir?” he anxiously, and in a tone of despondency, asked the physician.

“ I dare not flatter you, Sir ; this has been a complaint of long standing, and has taken too strong a hold for medicine to be of any service ; nor will I recommend a removal till I have seen the lady again, which I mean to do early in the evening.”

The physician then took his leave. Elton endeavoured to reconcile his afflicted grandson to the impending loss he seemed so likely to sustain. He did not attempt to console him by those common-place arguments in every body's mouth on such occasions—he merely requested he would bear his sorrows like a man, and recollect that it was very much in his power to render the last moments of Madame de Valcarné comparatively happy ;—unavailing grief would not effect a miracle in her favour, though it might render him incapable of attending to her last requests : the physician was not infallible, yet he was afraid his prognostics were no proofs of his want of skill.

“ However,

“ However, God’s will be done !” he continued ; “ death, to such a woman, can only be the forerunner of eternal bliss !”

Albertine knocked at their door, as he concluded, to tell them her mother wished to see them. She had been in tears, and said her mother had fainted twice since they left her, and seemed very weak and low ; she was desirous of making some alteration in her will, and talked as if she no longer entertained any hopes of her recovery.

“ But don’t you think she will get the better of her complaint, my dear friend ?” said she, addressing George.

“ I dare not argue upon the subject, Albertine, as my future happiness depends, in many respects, upon the restoration of her health.—I am afraid my abrupt appearance last night was too great a surprise in her weak state—I ought to have acted with more precaution ;—but let us join her—I

am impatient to enquire how she finds herself."

They proceeded up stairs. Madame de Valcarné was rather low, but seemed perfectly calm and composed; and almost immediately dismissing her daughter, acknowledged she found a strange alteration for the worse within the last hour, and thought she should not be able, as she had hoped, to be removed that evening;—she might be better in the morning; if not, she had the consolation to reflect that all her worldly affairs were settled.

"I made my will," she continued, "soon after my arrival in England—of course appointed you my executor, my dear Harcourt; and will you give me your word of honour that you will conform in every respect to my wishes?—A paper, which I have subjoined to the deed in question, will convince you that I have done more than
my

my duty by my daughter; but I love my Albertine !”

George endeavoured to conceal his emotion, while he assured her, as far as honour would permit him to comply with her decrees, he should ever look upon them as sacred.

“ I perfectly understand you, Harcourt—I know what your scruples are, and am happy I have broke through a resolution I had once formed, since I find upon no other conditions you would have executed my will ;—but trust to my honour in this case, and believe me you may safely make the promise which will contribute so much to my satisfaction.”

Harcourt no longer hesitated to oblige her, but entreated she would not give way to such melancholy reflections : while he pressed the hand to his lips she had presented, a manly tear, which he in vain endeavoured

either to restrain or disperse, fell upon it.

“ I have distressed your generous heart, my dear George,” said she, kissing the drop of sensibility on her hand ; “ but I thought it necessary to exact the promise you have so kindly given me. Should I not recover, we shall, I trust, meet in a far better place, where we shall be requited for all our sufferings ; and may some more fortunate woman than myself, equally capable of appreciating your merits, fall to your share !”

She sunk upon her pillow as she concluded, quite exhausted ; and as the lawyer arrived to make the proposed alterations in her will, Elton and George immediately retired.— Soon after, though they had neither of them much appetite, they sat down to dinner, each expressing their wishes, rather than their hopes, that Madame de Valcarné would yet be able to pursue her journey.— They were reasoning upon the probability of
such

such an event, when Albertine joined them : the lawyer was come, she said ; her mother had eat a very hearty dinner, considering her situation, and had sent her to request they would drink their coffee with her.

They made no objections, and found her in far better spirits than when they quitted her. George sat down upon the side of the bed, and Elton and Albertine at a table near the fire : for some time the conversation was pretty general, but soon after she had finished her second cup of coffee, the faint remains of colour that still tinged her cheeks, totally faded—her lips changed to a deadly white—she made an effort to speak, but her voice failed her. Excessively alarmed, George called to Albertine ; but before she could reach the bed, her mother rather revived, and was able to articulate, in a faint whisper—

“ I am better—my dinner does not agree with me, that is all,” waving her hand for
Albertine

Albertine to resume the seat she had quitted, and motioning for George to draw nearer. He did as she desired, and having rather recovered her voice, she fixed her languid eyes upon him, saying—

“ I feel we are doomed to part !—once more, my dear Harcourt, suffer me to enter into a few necessary details relative to the future.—I have left you the guardian of my daughter, because I am thoroughly acquainted with your excellent principles ;—only remember, if you diminish your own fortune to increase her's, you forfeit your word, and break the promise you so solemnly made me a few hours since.—You will find I have done my duty by her ;—I have merely laid upon her the same restrictions her late father did.—His will is inclosed in mine ; and I desire, if she lays herself open to it, that you will act up to the very letter of both.—In a box, containing my papers and other effects of value, you will find memorandums concerning all my money affairs.

fairs. My daughter is amply provided with jewels, &c. therefore, have those you will find belonging to me, set for your own use; they may be of some value in your eyes, as they will at least serve to remind you of their former owner. Here is the key of the box I allude to," taking one from under her pillow; "put it into your pocket—I shall then know it is secure."

Not chusing to contradict her, George obeyed; and she continued to converse with him a few minutes longer, when her voice faltered—she put out both her arms—leaned her head upon the bosom of her agitated companion—and, after a few seconds, was just able to articulate—"Oh my God!"—pressed the hand she held between her own—heaved a deep sigh—and expired!

George, who was soon convinced she had breathed her last, but was fearful of alarming Albertine, whose eyes were not directed that way, by degrees deposited his lifeless

burthen upon the pillow ; he rose, with a heart too full for utterance, and made Elton a sign he instantly understood, and as instantly requested Albertine would accompany him down stairs ;—presuming her mother might wish to have some private conversation with her young friend, she was not surpris'd at the request.

George remained behind, gazing in silent anguish upon the placid countenance of the deceased. The entrance of the landlady and a maid-servant, whom Mr. Elton had sent up stairs, broke into his reverie, and he hastily withdrew to the apartment he had occupied the preceding night, regretting that he had not proceeded, instead of writing, to Martinico, the moment it was in his power ; he might then, he conceived, have been in time to save the departed saint.

While he was thus unjustly mingling self-reproach with regret, Mr. Elton was breaking the melancholy tidings to Albertine, who

who bore the shock, he thought, with infinite fortitude; though she instantly burst into a violent flood of tears on sight of the physician, who, understanding that he could no longer be of service to his patient, came politely to make an offer of his house to her daughter, till whoever was appointed her guardian, could meet with a more eligible, or what they might think a more proper situation. He was a married man, had several daughters about her age, and had promised Madame de Valcarné, should she be taken off before the arrival of those friends she daily meant to send for, that he would take Albertine under his protection.

This he mentioned to Mr. Elton, who, flattered by his politeness, and conscious that the young lady would be very awkwardly situated either at the inn, or at the house he had taken, with only male companions, readily agreed to the Doctor's considerate proposal.

Having

Having thus happily disposed of one of the orphans, whom he now considered placed by Providence under his care, he went in search of the other, after he had given the necessary orders to have every thing belonging to the deceased, removed to the house prepared for their reception, as he presumed George would not chuse to leave Brighton till after the funeral.

He found him rather composed, and very ready to leave the inn;—they therefore immediately proceeded to their new habitation; and Mr. Elton's friendly consolation and just reflections, reconciled him to himself before he retired for the night; for, as that gentleman truly observed, the Revolution would have drove Madame de Valcarné from Martinico, had he been out of the question; and he might as well accuse her of being accessory to Count du Breuil's plot, as himself of being so to her death. A variety of circumstances had certainly hastened that deplorable event; still it ought to afford him
infinite

infinite consolation that he was so near her in her last moments;—and he must now prove the regard he bore her by conforming in every respect to her will, rendered doubly sacred by the affecting charges she gave him prior to her dissolution. That she was reaping the reward of her numerous virtues, it would be impiety to doubt; therefore it was selfish to repine.—Thus reasoned the excellent Elton, and he had the pleasure to perceive his arguments had the desired effect, as George seemed almost resigned to the inscrutable ways of Providence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

THE next morning Mr. Elton told George that the will ought to be immediately read, as such deeds sometimes contained orders or instructions which could not be too soon fulfilled. The attorney who made it was therefore sent for; and as he told them that Mr. Harcourt, whom he understood from the deceased was the youngest of the gentlemen he was then in company with, was her sole executor, they proceeded immediately to business; and George, as he rather expected, found that she had bequeathed him her whole remaining property (the principal of five thousand a-year, which she left her daughter,

daughter, excepted), with a letter addressed to himself inclosed, as was the Baron's will, in the deed they were perusing, reconciled Harcourt to what he would otherwise have thought a very improper distribution of her fortune, as he found, after examining all her memorandums, that he was to come into possession of upwards of eighteen thousand a-year !

The late Baron had left Albertine three thousand a-year, which was all his private property, George discovered upon looking over his will ; and she forfeited all claim to that if she married without *Madame la Baronne de Valcerné's consent* : such were the exact words of the deed ; and the Baronne had put her bequest under similar restrictions, leaving the whole to her executor, if Albertine did not consult him in her choice of a husband.

George thought this a very unnecessary clause, as it appeared to him hardly possible
that

that she could make a choice which would meet his disapprobation, and was rather astonished, as she did make some trifling alteration in her will after she had seen Mr. Elton, that she had not at least joined his name in the trust, as he could not help thinking his age made him a very unfit guardian for a young person, left almost friendless in a foreign country, without any female relatives to guide her future conduct. He therefore determined to consult Mr. Elton in every thing concerning his ward.

As the Baronne had not mentioned her being privy to the reasons which induced her to make him her principal heir, he determined not to shew her the letter which had convinced him that she had a very just right to bequeath her fortune to whom she chose.

To Mr. Elton he was not equally reserved, and to him also he delegated the acting part of his trust; that gentleman, therefore,
gave

gave the orders respecting the funeral, and undertook to read the will to Albertine, and to assure her, in her young guardian's name, that he should make it his first business when he arrived in London, to provide a proper and agreeable place of residence for her, suitable to her fortune and former connections.

She was happy to see the old gentleman much less affected (though he could not help lamenting her late melancholy loss) than his favourite George; and appeared by no means astonished at the distribution the Baronne had made of her fortune; she hoped she should see Mr. Elton, junior, often before he left Brighton, and seemed so satisfied with her situation, that Elton, finding Dr. and Mrs. Benson were in the habit of taking genteel female boarders during the season, entreated that they would permit Mademoiselle de Valcarné to remain with them for the present, upon the same terms. This they readily agreed to, as his offers
were,

were, like himself, truly liberal; they promised to procure her a maid-servant, and to make every thing perfectly agreeable to their new inmate.

Thus relieved from so delicate and, in some respects, troublesome a charge, George felt a great weight taken off his mind; he still mourned sincerely for the deceased, and made a point of attending her funeral, which was suitable to her rank in life, and the immense fortune she had left behind her. He then, having taken a very kind fraternal leave of Albertine, and promised to correspond with her while she remained in Suffex, set out for London with his kind grandfather.

As this good man was particularly fond of the country, they slept at his elegant villa upon Clapham Common, in preference to pursuing their journey to the capital, and dedicated the ensuing day to repose in that quiet retreat, which George declared far surpassed

surpassed his expectation. The amiable owner requested that he would always consider it as his home ; and was highly flattered to find the alteration in his circumstances made none in his favourite's former intention of continuing to reside with him.

Elton undertook to bespeak him a town-chariot, and to provide him with the necessary servants his increase of fortune made it requisite should be added to his establishment. He would fain have introduced him during the week to some of his friends ; but George was rather averse to join in any parties. Madame de Valcerné's death had made, considering his age, too deep an impression on his mind to permit him to enjoy the society of strangers ; still, not to be a restraint upon his kind host, he generally accompanied him in his morning excursions to London, and while he visited his numerous friends, George took a cursory view of whatever was worthy of notice in the metropolis.

They regularly returned to Clapham to dinner, as Elton thought the air would be of service to them both, and was happy to find his grandson's melancholy subsiding into a calm resignation to those inevitable decrees, against which it as vain as impious to murmur.

He took advantage of his renovated spirits one evening, after they had been near a fortnight at Clapham, to request he would accompany him to town in the morning, as he was summoned to attend the Court (of which he was a member) at Guildhall, and as George had never been in such a party, it might afford him some amusement; and he should be very happy if he would allow him to introduce him to the Lord Mayor, with whom he had rather reluctantly promised to dine, dubious whether George would also favour his Lordship with his company; and he could not bear the idea of leaving him behind in the country, or suffering him to dine alone at his town-house.

“ 1

“ I shall attend your Court with pleasure, my dear Sir,” George replied ; “ but, till I am out of mourning, I must entreat that you would permit me to decline either paying or receiving visits. I shall dine, with your permission, in Great George Street, and, as I presume you will not chuse to return to Clapham after dark, I will take the opportunity of viewing London by lamp-light, a sight I have not yet enjoyed, and which I conceive, to a stranger, must be peculiarly striking.—Let me entreat you would not leave the company a moment sooner upon my account ; I shall probably take a long stroll.”

“ You shall do as you like, my dear fellow ; but at all events I shall be at home at ten o’clock, and happy to meet you at supper ;” and thus the matter was settled.

George was very well amused at the hall, he assured Elton as they returned home (for the latter to dress for his dinner visit) and thought the City might boast of some very

good orators. The old gentleman parted from him with reluctance, but hoped that he would derive some amusement from his projected ramble.

George was considering where first to direct his steps, when taking up a map of London, Leicester Square caught his attention, and brought the Mackenzies to his mind; a ridiculous thought instantly struck him—he rang the bell without giving himself time to reflect, or to arrange his plan. The butler, a favourite servant of the old gentleman's, who had accompanied him abroad, soon made his appearance.

“ Walker,” said George, “ I should like to know whether a family of the name of Mackenzie, with whom I was once acquainted, still reside, as I was informed, in Leicester Square;—send one of the footmen to make the enquiry without going to the house, as I do not wish to excite their curiosity.”

“ I

“ I will step myself, Sir—I shan’t be gone many minutes.”

George was pleased with his readiness, and, as he was not very much interested in the success of his embassy, amused himself with studying the map. In a short time Walker returned.

“ Was the gentleman I went to enquire about, a portrait painter, Sir?”

“ He was.”

“ Then, Sir, he still lives in Leicester Square ; but he is become a very great man ; he was knighted a fortnight ago, and is now Sir Archibald Mackenzie.”

“ You amaze me!” exclaimed George, really surprised by the unexpected intelligence ; and instantly determined to pay the newly created Knight a visit, wishing to see how these new honours sat upon his modest brow.

Near four years had elapsed since he had last seen this family, and he thought it very possible that they might, or at least would affect not to know him; at all events he was curious to discover how they would behave. Should he announce himself as the grandson and heir of the rich Mark Elton, he need not fear a polite reception; but this would not be making a fair trial of their hearts. John Mackenzie could not be returned to England, or he would know him under his present name; but he had nothing to fear on that score, and he longed very much to see his dear Mary, whom he was convinced he should find as much his friend as ever.

While revolving these ideas in his mind, Walker stood waiting his further commands. At last looking at him, he said—

“ I was once very intimate with this Knight of fresh date, but we dropped our acquaintance very abruptly; and I have
some

some reason to believe that he has very little wish to renew it, as there are some money matters between us, which he knows have not been settled to the satisfaction of some of my friends. I can depend upon your discretion, Walker; and I own I should like to be certain whether or not he would relieve me, admitting I was in distress;—but I can't put him to the test without your assistance, my present dress not being calculated to excite charity."

Walker instantly seized his idea, and said he could easily procure him a proper disguise, if he wished to pay Sir Archibald a visit that evening, or at any future time.

"Oh to-night, by all means," replied George, "if you can fit me out privately for the expedition."

Walker hastily withdrew, and returned in a few minutes with an old brown coat and waistcoat of his master's, that had been thrown about for some years, a pair of

worsted stockings, and a flapped hat. George instantly changed his dress, and was highly amused with his own figure, as the clothes were much too big as well as too short.

“ I think this will do,” said he, while admiring himself in a large pier-glass.

“ Your hair hardly looks of a piece with your dress, Sir,” said Walker.

“ Very true—do you arrange, or rather derange it more in character.”

This was immediately done ; and Walker, who was to attend him in his peregrination, sallied out with him as soon as the coast was clear, as George particularly wished to avoid being seen by any of the other servants, though a large great-coat, which he meant to leave with his companion while he paid his visit, completely concealed his dress.

It would be difficult to define his feelings during his short walk. The moon shone very bright, which enabled him to distinguish,

guish, even before he reached the door, which had been pointed out to him, "*Sir Archibald Mackenzie*" upon a very large bright brass plate.

He had left Walker and his great-coat in a neighbouring court, with orders to wait his return; he therefore approached the mansion, and gave, according to Walker's instructions not to offend, a single tap at the door. He was allowed full time to study his part, and was going to repeat his knock, when he heard somebody in the passage, and in a few seconds the door was opened by a footboy in a livery (if a duffel jacket, ornamented with a dark blue collar and cuffs, deserved the appellation); but this was another convincing proof that they lived in a much higher style than they ever did at Paris, as one maid-servant comprised their establishment during their residence abroad. The lad, with the door in one hand, and a light in the other, called out—

“What do you want?”

“Is Sir Archibald Mackenzie at home?”

“Yes; what have you got to say to him?”

“Let him know that a gentleman wishes to speak with him.”

“A gentleman!” repeated the boy grinning, and surveying the shabby clothes of the person who addressed him, “well, come in,” stepping back to allow him to enter the passage; he then closed the door; “you may wait here, while I goes and tells master you want him.”

George nodded assent, and looked round him by the faint glimmer of the receding light, as the boy very deliberately ascended the staircase, which was handsomely carpeted; and a large gilt lanthorn suspended in the passage, though not illuminated, appeared to him a proof of increasing opulence; the house too seemed large and commodious. The Principal's suspicions recurred to his mind. At Paris, Mackenzie's talents had
barely

barely supported his family ;—he must either have strangely improved them to become a great favourite with the public, or unexpectedly fallen into a large fortune ; or, as Mr. Douglas suspected, he shining at his expence.

The footboy, having reached the top of the stairs, opened the dining-room door, and went in to announce this unexpected and, as George had foreseen, unwelcome visiter.

The Knight and his family had heard the gentle knock which remained so long unanswered, and her Ladyship, ever prone to put the most favourable construction upon every thing, had given it as her opinion that it was some visiter of the cook's, who had been let in through the area ; and, as it was not one of her principles to be eat out of house and home by a parcel of lazy cheating servants, she was hurrying down her last dish of tea, meaning to go and disturb the party that she conceived were enjoying themselves.

in her kitchen and at her expence, when the boy made his appearance, and, without allowing him time to shut the door, she began—

“ I believe, boy, ye think we ainly keep ye to look at ;—wha was that knocked at the door ?”

“ A man, my Lady,” replied the lad in a grumpish tone, “ as wants master.”

“ A mon, ye stupid loon, we should have guessed it was nae a monster. Will ye never larn to announce a person properly, nor to caw yere master Sir Archibald ?—But wha is it, boy ?”

“ I knowed a man from a gentleman afore I comed to live here, my Lady—so what harm was there in saying a man ?—If it had been that there Lord that comed here once, why I should have said so.”

Lady Mackenzie protested she was tempted to get up and box the impudent puppy's ears ;

ears ; but the Knight, swelling with self-importance, called out—

“ Give your Lady a proper answer this moment, you young rascal ; who is it can want me at such a time of night ? ”

“ I don’t know, Sir Archibald—I never feed the man before.”

“ Where is he ? ” enquired the Knight.

“ In the passage, Sir Archibald.”

“ Merciful Heaven ! ” exclaimed her Ladyship, “ I shall have my hoose stripped through this stupid loon.—Are the parlour doors locked ? ”

“ Did you enquire the fellow’s business ? ” said Mr. Archibald, who, with his sister Margaret, completed the family party.

“ There is nothing but chairs and tables for him to steal, my Lady ; the China is all locked up in the closet, and you have got the key.”

Exasperated beyond endurance, her Ladyship started up to put her former threats into

into execution ; but was prevented by her more patient husband, who requested she would not give way to passion, but leave the saucy young rascal to his correction ; as while they were attending to him, the stranger would have an opportunity to rob the house, and make his escape undetected. Such a probable suggestion induced her Ladyship to desire the boy to “gang his gait that moment, and send the fellow up stairs.”

George, who had overheard all that passed, thought he could not have taken them in a more charitable disposition. The lad looked over the banisters, and holding out his candle, cried—

“ Here, master, come along ! ”

George obeyed the summons, and strove to compose his countenance for the interview. The boy threw the door open with such violence, that it rebounded back before he was within the room.

“ Was

“ Was there ever any thing—” Lady Mackenzie stopped, and fixed her eyes upon her shabby guest, with evident signs of disapprobation. The solitary taper burning upon the table before her, gave a very dim light ; she therefore caught up her spectacles to take a better survey of the ill-dressed figure advancing towards her ; who, like herself, was intently examining the countenances of the group he had in view.

Her Ladyship was very little altered.—The Knight raised himself in his large arm-chair, and seemed not only to feel, but to wish to make every one else sensible of the consequence he had so lately acquired.—Archibald turned his head half over his shoulder, as he sat with his back to the door, and in this easy posture, with the most sovereign contempt depicted upon his bloated countenance, surveyed George from head to foot.—Margaret, ever far from handsome, was by no means improved in point of appearance,

pearance, and her spiteful disposition was very discernible on her fallow countenance.

George bowed to each in turn, and a silence of half a minute or more ensued ; no one returned his compliment, nor, considering his appearance, and their recent honours, could such an excess of condescension be expected. Having, however, gazed as long as they chose at this bold intruder, who did not even lower his eyes under their scrutinizing glances, the Knight, in a pompous tone, began with—

“ Well, good man, what is your business with me ? ”

“ Does Sir Archibald Mackenzie do me the honour to recollect me ? ”

“ Not I truly—nay I never saw you before to my knowledge.”

“ Has your Ladyship also quite forgot my features ? ”

“ I suppose I see them now for the first time,” was the retort courteous.

“ I

“ I find I am infinitely more altered than I was aware of,” replied George, though he was tempted to suspect both the Knight and his Lady *did* know him, as their colour varied, and they exchanged a few stolen glances of wonder and amaze ; while Archibald, junior, in a tone meant to impress the stranger with terror, exclaimed—

“ Who the devil are you ?—whence came you ?—and what do you want, fellow ?”

“ Aye, let us know that,” said the Knight, endeavouring to rally his spirits ; “ don’t fancy I am, with impunity, to be trifled with—what do you mean by pretending to know us ?—and what is your name ?”

“ George Harcourt, Sir Archibald, at your service.”

The Knight moved back in his chair, while he involuntarily repeated, “ George Harcourt !” and his family re-echoed the unwelcome name. Lady Mackenzie, as if unwilling to credit the confirmation of her doubts, again resumed her spectacles, snuffed the

the candle, and took another stare at this now hateful visiter.

His apparent poverty afforded her infinite triumph, and she exclaimed, with an accent of satisfaction—"Is it possible!" while she exultingly glanced her eyes over *the all-accomplished youth*, Principal Douglas used to prognosticate would do honour to any profession, or to any station.

"Weel, boy," she continued, "ye seem to have verified my predictions;—but I cannae help admiring yere assurance—a pretty figure truly to claim acquaintance with me and mine!"

"Figure indeed!" quoth Margaret, drawing up her scraggy neck; "pride seems to have had a fall."

"Never to rise, I am of opinion," said Archibald; "if one may judge from appearances, George, your present dress once graced Monmouth Street."

The

The undaunted raggamuffin, as they wished to have styled him, totally inattentive to these kind apostrophes, stood scrutinizing the variable countenance of his *quondam* guardian, who sometimes endeavoured, by raising his eyes, to look the low fellow into awe of his superior rank, but as instantly lowered them under his penetrating glances, while the blood forsook his cheeks, and as momentarily returned with redoubled violence ; till, trembling with rage, and supporting himself by the table before him, he half rose from his chair, saying, in a tremulous accent—

“ Well, if you are George Harcourt, what then?—what does all this mean, I should be glad to know?—have you any demands upon me?—did not I give you up every shilling of your fortune?—What, because you are of age, and as poor as a church-mouse, you fancy you have some claims upon me;—but don’t think to frighten me out of any thing more—I defy
you,

you, or any man, to prove that I have not done my duty by you in every respect."

The Knight stopped, and made use of his pocket-handkerchief. George, more and more convinced of the justice of the Principal's remarks, replied with ironical deliberation—

"You need not alarm yourself, Sir Archibald; I am not come to make those claims you seem to dread."

"Dread, Sir," repeated the Knight; "dread! I would have you to know——"

"I beg pardon, Sir Archibald," interrupted George; "but you seem to mistake my meaning. A man of your integrity can have nothing to fear!—You say you did your duty; and, with respect to money matters, I don't dispute your word; nor do you owe my present visit to my doubts respecting your probity."

"Then what brought you here?" demanded her Ladyship.

"A

“ A very presumptive hope, my Lady, that you and Sir Archibald had not quite forgot such a being as myself existed.”

“ Where have you been for these last four years, George ?” enquired Archy.

“ Haud yere tongue, boy—ask the fellow nae questions ; ye may lead him into sin ; and it nae signifies to us where he has been.”

“ I hope, Lady Mackenzie,” rejoined George, “ among the numerous faults you discovered in me during our former acquaintance, deceit and falsity were left out of your catalogue.”

“ Oh ! I never discovered ony gude in you, boy ; but I have nae objection to hear what you have got to say, since my son wishes it.”

“ Your Ladyship is excessively obliging. As you observe, it certainly cannot concern you ; still I am very willing to gratify your curiosity.—I have spent some part of my time in Martinico since I last had the advantage of seeing you and Mr. Mackenzie—

I beg

I beg ten thousand pardons—your *Ladyship* and *Sir Archibald*, I meant to have said.”

This wilful, for such we must acknowledge it was, omission of their blushing honours, was not likely to conciliate the favour of people as fond of the magic sounds as ever a child was of a new plaything;—George instantly read his condemnation in their furious looks, and her *Ladyship* said—

“Ye are as impudent as ever, George—and ye seem to have laid aside the little politeness ye did once possess.”

“I hope your *Ladyship* will reflect that I am but just arrived from France, where civility has been totally banished, to make way for liberty and equality, and where every title is sunk in the agreeable one of *Citoyen*; but I am sure your *Ladyship* is far superior to the false pride some narrow-minded people feel, when so honourable an addition is made to their name. I notwithstanding offended very inadvertently; for I have a very great
respect

respect for Sir Archibald and your Ladyship, and the rest of your *worthy* family."

George's ironical looks by no means coincided with his speech; and her Ladyship, with as much indifference as she could assume, considering her internal rage, said—

"None of yere compliments, Harcourt; mainly let me know what brought ye into Leiceſter Square, that is aw I require."

"A vain deluſion of my mind, my Lady, which flattered me that, *ſhould* I return poor and needy, I ſhould nevertheless be a welcome gueſt at my father's friend's."

"Ye may weel caw yere folly deluſion—ye have long ſince forfeited aw pretenſions either to our frienſhip or protection, ye proud, inſolent, beggarly varlet—ye hardly ken how to be provoking enough;—but were ye ſtarving, nay begging yere bread from door to door, neither me, nor mine, would relieve yere neceſſities, ye idle, lazy vagabond;

bond; for had ye been gude for ony thing, ye would nae have been in want."

"That is very true, my dear," rejoined the Knight; "he was always a proud, obstinate fellow. His former great friends have enough to do to take care of themselves these troublesome times, if they have escaped the guillotine; and he would now, notwithstanding his gentleman-like education, the Principal made such a boast of, lick the dust off my shoes to obtain a recommendation to a clerk's place!"

George, far more amused than offended, replied very coolly—

"The only thing I came to solicit, Sir Archibald, was your friendship—your bounty I can dispense with."

"What the grapes are for—ha, George!" retorted Archy; "but I wonder, since you say you are just returned from France, you did not try your fortune in their *Sans Culotte* army, as you studied the art of war at their

their Military School ;—and you put me very much in mind of one of Falstaff's recruits."

"The best thing I ever heard you say, Mr. Mackenzie," replied George, to their infinite surprise and serious mortification, bursting into a violent fit of laughter.

This was an insult not to be borne: the Knight rose from his seat, but, prudently; immediately sat down again. Her Ladyship unthinkingly dashed her spectacles down among her China ;—the rattle alarmed her, and prevented her from denouncing immediate vengeance on the culprit's head.—Margaret muttered out, with a scornful toss of her head, "Hardened wretch!"—Archibald jumped up, and holding by the back of his chair with one hand, and, though with visible signs of trepidation, threatened the daring intruder with the other; who was so evidently diverted by their rage, as increased it to little short of madness. Her Ladyship once or twice raised the tea-pot with dire intent, but fortunately recollected it was a brittle weapon,

and prudently replaced it upon the board. With difficulty George once more composed his features, and bowing to the irritated party, said—

“ I wish you a very good evening.—I think it needless to apologize for an intrusion I thought authorized by circumstances ; as, overlooking the past, I expected to have met with a very different reception, even under my present appearance. Depend upon it I will never afford you another opportunity of displaying the benevolence of your dispositions.”

“ Oot of my house, ye saucy loon—gang yere gait ;—and remember, I prophesy ye will die in yere shoes ;—and if ever ye dare to darken my doors again, I will have ye shewn a nearer way oot than ye came in, ye scurvy varlet.”

“ Come troop, *Mr. Citoyen*,” cried Archy, certain of meeting with support, “ lest I should be tempted to treat you as you deserve.”

“ No

“ No words can express how cordially I despise, and how little I fear you, Mackenzie,” answered George; “ necessity indeed must bring me again into this house,” turning upon his heel as he concluded.

“ Follow the vile loon, Archy—see him safe out of the house,” cried my Lady.

But Archy prudently chose to remain at the top of the stairs, where the footboy had been waiting and listening to the foregoing conversation, with which he had been highly diverted, gave George a grin of approbation as he came out, and hurried down before him, when, to his infinite surprise, this strange visiter slipped half-a-crown into his hand, and made him a sign to step without the door, when George enquired where Miss Mary was?

“ She has been dead these six months, Sir.”

“ Good God!” exclaimed George.

“ Ah Sir, every body loved her!”

At that moment Archy called—"Where are you, Sam?"

"Why I am coming," growled the boy; then in a lower confidential tone—"there never was such a stingy set in the varsal world as all our folks—blefs you, we are half starved for all our fine house."

George no longer attended to the lad, who reluctantly returned into the inhospitable mansion, while he breathed a sigh to the memory of the gentle Mary Mackenzie, and could not help thinking that the unfeeling beings he had just quitted, had shortened her days. Walker, who had been watching for him, approached with his great-coat; he merely gave him to understand that his visit had turned out as he expected while they were hastening home, where he immediately threw off his disguise, and set out upon his intended walk.

CHAP. XVI.

FOR some minutes after his departure, the family in Leicester Square sat revolving in silence, the various reflections his unexpected visit had given rise to in their minds, till the Knight burst out with—

“ We have certainly been much to blame, Lady Mackenzie—Harcourt had some meaning we ought to have endeavoured to fathom.”

“ Ye are right there, Sir Archibald, he had a meaning—he wanted to get some filler; what else could fitch a shabby wretch come for?—Though it might have been as well

to have sifted him a little more, just to have heard how many lies he would have told."

"Yes, we ought to have been more particular in our enquiries; but Archy and you were in such a deuced hurry to affront him, you would not give me time to cross-question him, as I intended.—He may be troublesome—I only wish I had not delivered up his dab of money before he was of age."

"I ainly wish ye would nae talk nonsense, Sir Archibald.—Ye think, I presume, we ought to have asked the varlet to favour us with his company, till he could meet with a situation, or have ta'en him in, and provided for him as if he had been our son; but ye are always foreseeing what yere wisdom would never prevent."

"My dear, I don't pretend to dispute your prudence; I only meant to observe that the fellow was very impudent; his dress was queer and shabby enough, I must allow; yet it might be a disguise—he was always in some pranks at Paris.—I can't think Principal Douglas, who you know is
still

still living, would have let this favourite want.—Altogether I am not satisfied; however, God send he may have quarrelled with that old fool, and be as poor as he appeared!”

“ God send ye would keep yere ain counsel, Sir Archibald—with yere ifs and yere ands ye quite provoke me. Let the worst come to the worst, what have ye to dread?—a little trouble to prove that ye have been a faithful steward to the false loon. He cannae attack ye without money;—and, mark my words, George Harcourt must be strangely altered if he is nae as poor as Job; and wha do ye think would set out for Rome to please him, without some filler?—Ye talk, as often ye do, like an ideot;—besides, is nae yere account as clear as noon-day?—Was nae Margaret and Archy present when ye paid him his money?—and is nae yere character sufficiently established?—Ye may surely defy what fitch a reptile can say. Ne’er trouble yere head ony more about him

—the next thing we hear of him will be, that he is going to be hanged!”

Nevertheless the Knight continued thoughtful; Archy talked big, and vowed if the fellow ever came across him again, he should not escape with impunity.

“Hoot, ye prating coward, nae fancy to deceive me—ye shook for fear to-night while ye were vapouring, with yere clenched fist. Ye may blefs God that Sir Archibald and me were born before ye.—Dinnae provoke me, Archy, for ye ken yere wits would afford ye scanty fare.”

Thus venting their spleen upon each other, did this sociable family spend their evening, while the object of their secret dread and avowed hatred made the tour of the principal and most populous streets in London; and found Mr. Elton in Great George Street upon his return; who enquired where he had

had been, and whether he had seen any thing worthy notice.

“ I have been surveying a family picture, Sir, drawn by a masterly hand, as all the portraits were taken from life; though I can't say they do much honour to human nature.” Relating what had induced him to visit the new made Knight, and what had passed between him and the family.

Elton was highly amused, and pronounced Sir Archibald guilty of every charge the Principal had brought against him, and declared that he would devise some means to alarm him still more. There must be a great number of people still living at Rome, who had been acquainted with his father; and through their means it might be discovered what part of his property the Mackenzies had embezzled. Besides, they might possibly obtain some knowledge of his mother's family through the same channel.

This George thought very probable, and declared he would undertake the journey himself early in the Spring. Elton thought a man of business, less interested in the enquiries he wanted to make, would be more likely to obtain information. This George agreed was also very probable, but wished first to consult Principal Douglas, to whom he had written twice since his arrival in England.

Elton was pleased with the thought, and made him once more minutely describe the recent scene at the Mackenzies, protesting he had half a mind to call there himself under some pretence or other, as they struck him as being a most curious set of originals.

The ensuing week George spent chiefly at Clapham, where the dog Mackenzie had sent him, now grown a very fine creature, was his constant companion in his various excursions round Elton's villa, though he seldom took him to town.

Albertine

Albertine frequently wrote to him; and though she found no fault with her situation, lamented the distance that separated her from her guardian, and requested that he would send for her to London as soon as possible. He communicated her wishes to Mr. Elton, who said he would make enquiries among his female friends for a proper residence; advising him to recommend patience to her for the present, as the family she was with were agreeable people, and their house, in many respects, a comfortable habitation.

George declared, but for the Revolution, that he would take her to Paris; as she would indubitably be happier among French society, than she ever would be in England.

“Very true,” replied Elton; “and had those Mackenzies behaved with common decency, they might have acquired a valuable boarder.”

“Had that idea struck me,” said George, “I would not have played upon their fine
P 6 feelings;”

feelings; for positively Lady Mackenzie can, when it is her interest, be very agreeable, and Albertine might have been more disagreeably situated than under her care; yet her Ladyship has unfortunately taken so little pains to conceal her real principles before me, that I should almost tremble for the fate of my ward, were she an inmate of that house."

"You will believe that I was merely joking," rejoined Elton; "but should chance throw you again in the way of that disinterested family, how do you mean to treat them?"

"As total strangers.—John Mackenzie I really wish to serve; he only knows me under the name of Elton, and his account of me, should I chance to meet them in his company, won't afford them much satisfaction."

"I think, on the contrary, they would be gloriously perplexed," cried Elton; "but I will exert my interest in favour of John. I am invited to-morrow to meet one of the great men of the times; will you accompany

me to London?—I wish you to visit our public places—I don't half like your leading such a hermit sort of a life."

"I will go to the Play to-morrow night," replied George, smiling at the good man's earnestness, who seemed very much pleased with his determination, and mentioned that he expected to dine the next day with a set of politicians, who were ever disputing about what was of little consequence to any of them. This led to an explanation of the nature of the British funds, with which George was but imperfectly acquainted. The old gentleman then reverted to the destructive system of finance the French adopted during the American war, which had finally ended in the fatal Revolution that threatened to convulse all Europe; and then descanted upon the leading events which had accelerated that melancholy epoch.

George thought he was not very correct in some of his dates; Elton referred him to the newspapers, which he always kept filed, acknow-

acknowledging that his memory was not very good. The papers of the last two years were therefore brought in ; George looked them over, and was reading an account of the King and Queen of France being forced from Versailles by the populace, when the following advertisement caught his attention :

“ GEORGE HARCOURT.

“ If a young man of that name (born at Rome in the year 17—, son of a painter by profession, of the same name, who left that city during his childhood, and was educated at the Scotch College in Paris, which he quitted in the year 17—, and went over to Martinico with the Marquis de Fierval, Governor of that Island, where he resided upwards of eighteen months, and was then supposed to have been forced away against his will, at least has never been heard of by any of his friends since) is still living, and will apply to Mr. Oswald, of Lincoln's Inn, Solicitor, he will hear of something very
much

much to his advantage ; or if any person can give information concerning the said George Harcourt, let him be living or dead, they shall be handsomely rewarded by applying as above."

Had Elton been looking at his companion, he must have remarked the alteration in his countenance while he was perusing this minute enquiry after himself ; but the old gentleman was making some memorandums, and deeply engaged in calculations concerning the *bonus* offered to the subscribers for the new loan.

George raised his eyes, and perceiving how Elton was employed, checked his first impulse, and read the advertisement once more. Who could have put it in ?—Not the old gentleman, since he was ignorant of his having ever been either at the Scotch College or in Martinico, before they met ; besides this enquiry, by the date, had been

inserted while he was abroad, as he told him he left England on his road to Nice the beginning of September, and the paper was dated the following month : it was therefore more than probable that Elton had never seen it. Nor was it likely that it originated in Madame de Valcarné ; she would have mentioned her having had recourse to such a method ; or, had she been acquainted with the attorney to whom he, or any other person, was referred, was it likely she would have employed any other to make her will ? —Principal Douglas next came across him, and he remembered his mentioning the visit he had received from a stranger, to enquire after him. This person might be some friend of his father's, instead of an agent of Elton's, as he had hitherto supposed. This advertisement warranted the suspicion, and the word *advantage* led him to imagine a will of the deceased, or some part of his property had fallen into some gentleman's hands, who wished to deliver up his trust.

He

He was going to communicate this idea to Elton, when he reflected that he should only revive disagreeable recollections in the good man's bosom; and after all, the advertisement might originate in the French Ambassador, whom the Marquis de Fierval had possibly interested in his behalf; or in some of Elton's most officious friends, who hoped to get well rewarded, should they make any discoveries through this method. He therefore determined to wait upon the Solicitor the next day, and satisfy himself respecting who had thus publicly appeared interested in his affairs, before he mentioned the matter to Elton, who was too much immersed in the profundity of his financial calculations, even to remark the unusual absence of mind George displayed during the remainder of the evening.

He rose early the next morning, and immediately wrote the following note:—

“A

“ A gentleman, personally acquainted with Mr. Harcourt, into whose hands an advertisement concerning him, dated last October twelvemonth, fell very accidentally yesterday evening, is ready to satisfy Mr. Oswald as to his existence, present residence, &c. if the same reasons which induced Mr. O. to advertise him, still subsist.”

He then rung for his own man, and desired him to go to London after breakfast, and proceed directly to Lincoln's Inn, where he was to wait for an answer to the note he gave him; which he ordered him to bring into Great George Street, where he should dine, dress, and sleep, as he meant to go to the play; cautioning him, should Mr. Oswald ask any questions, which was very probable, to evade mentioning his name or place of residence, by referring that gentleman to him.

Thus

Thus instructed, the Swift, who spoke very good English, soon set out; and fortunately Elton had an early appointment in town, as George was particularly anxious to learn the result of his address to the lawyer.

Estevus was in Great George Street when they arrived, and was immediately summoned into his master's dressing-room, who hardly let him come within the door, before he asked—

“What answer have you brought?—Did you see Mr. Oswald?”

“Yes, Sir; he has not wrote; but he seems a very curious gentleman. He asked me a hundred questions, I do believe. I hardly knew what to make of him.—In the first place he asked me if I was not the person?—I told him I did not know what he meant, and that I was valet to the gentleman who had sent him the note.—‘Where does your master live?’ was his next enquiry.—I told him I supposed you would have informed him, Sir,
had

had you thought it necessary ; but if he had any answer or message to send, he might depend upon my punctually delivering either. So he then desired me to present his compliments to you, Sir, and that he was sorry you had not favoured him with your address, because, in that case, he would have delivered the answer to your note in person ; but as it was, ordered me to call again about one o'clock."

Thus was George's patience put to a farther trial ;—it was now twelve, and he had half a mind to wait upon the attorney instead of sending ; but then reflecting that the whole might end in nothing, he determined to dispatch Estevus once more. The fellow was shrewd and clever, and he could depend upon his discretion, therefore told him to return at the appointed time ; and felt, from experience, that nothing is more disagreeable than suspense—no two hours on board the pirate's ship ever appeared longer than

than those he was doomed to spend, waiting the return of his messenger.

In vain did he endeavour to persuade himself he should not be disappointed, admitting the elucidation of the matter should prove of no consequence; as the idea that it originated in some friend of his father's gained ground in his opinion every succeeding moment.

2

That few children had been more beloved by a parent than himself, his own recollection, strengthened by Mary Mackenzie's remarks, placed beyond a doubt; therefore was it not natural to suppose that such a father had, even in his last moments, been studiously occupied in concerting plans for his advantage? Yet would not this confidential friend, if such there were, have been sooner forthcoming?—and would not he have been addressed to the Mackenzies?—These were points he had not settled to his satisfaction, when Estevus entered his dressing-

ing-room, where, to avoid interruption, he had shut himself up, under pretence of writing letters.

Elton was gone to his appointment; but, as his return was uncertain, he chose to keep out of his way till his mind was in some respects relieved from his present anxious doubts and expectations.

The valet took a note from his pocket, which George eagerly opened, and read as follows:—

“ Mr. Oswald presents respectful compliments to the gentleman who favoured him with the note concerning Mr. Harcourt this morning, and shall esteem it as a particular favour, if he can make it convenient to meet him at his Grace the Duke of Durham's, in St. James's Square, at eight o'clock this evening.”

This

This note was almost as perplexing as his former uncertainty, till he recollected having heard Principal Douglas mention his relationship to the Durham family ; and all his air-built visions concerning his father vanished before the certainty that these promises of advantage, and public enquiry, rested at last with the good old Principal. He therefore was seriously angry with himself for not having waited upon the Solicitor at once, who would immediately have satisfied his idle curiosity ; for had he possessed three grains of common sense, he was convinced it would have occurred to him that his disappearance from Martinico, or Mr. Elton's benevolent wish to serve him, had occasioned the insertion of the advertisement he had taken so much trouble about, and he was half inclined to pay Mr. Oswald a visit immediately, as he thought it would be truly absurd to intrude upon the Duke of Durham's leisure on so frivolous an occasion.

Still

Still he thought, if that Nobleman had, at the Principal's request, thus interested himself in his affairs, such an opportunity of expressing his gratitude ought not to be neglected; he therefore finally resolved, instead of going to the Play, to meet the attorney in St. James's Square.

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CHAP. XVII.

ELTON came home to dress, and expressed his regret at being thus forced to leave his grandson alone; but assured him he should be at home long before the Play was over, and enquired to which house he meant to go?—He had not decided, he replied; he should consult the Play-bills.—Elton repeated what news he had heard in the city, and at four o'clock set out for his dinner visit.

George still wore slight mourning in memory of Madame de Valcarné, and at a quarter before eight left Great George Street,

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and

and soon found himself at the door of Durham House. Though few people were more absolutely free from *mauvaise honte*, few were more sensible of the necessary subordination in the ranks of society; even his inborn pride taught him politely to reverence his superiors. Unknown, therefore, as he was to the Duke, he ordered his servant to enquire for Mr. Oswald, and was informed that the Solicitor was waiting his arrival. He instantly alighted, and was shewn into a superb library, without any farther questions being asked; the groom of the chambers, who preceded him, said, as he opened the door—

“ The gentleman to Mr. Oswald.”

The Duke had been a fine figure, and was still a fine gentleman, in spite of infirmities and silver locks; his countenance, though venerable, was infinitely pleasing, and his manners were at once dignified and truly

truly graceful. From Mr. Oswald's account, he had presumed his expected visiter was a man of fashion ; why his valet had been so reserved respecting his name and residence he could not divine, and was debating the matter with the Solicitor when George arrived, whose figure, face, and manners were all calculated to make the most agreeable impresson upon his Grace, who, as well as another gentleman in black, and the Solicitor, had risen to receive him, and requested George would take possession of a chair the servant had placed, nearly opposite the one occupied by his master. He obeyed in silence, while the Duke continued earnestly to gaze upon one of the handsomest and most animated countenances, he thought, he had ever seen ; till the rising colour of his guest reminded him of his involuntary rudeness, and induced him hastily to withdraw his eyes, fixing them upon some pictures nearly behind where George sat ; who, anxious to come to the point, produced the

note which had brought him to Durham House, and looking at Mr. Oswald, said—

“ I presume, Sir, you are the gentleman from whom I received this note, and have no doubt informed his Grace why I have thus intruded upon his leisure?”

The Attorney bowed, saying—

“ Had you honoured me with your address, Sir, I should, as I told your valet, have waited upon you instead of writing; but his Grace is so nearly interested in every thing that concerns Mr. Harcourt, he wished to receive the information your note led me to suppose you could give him, from the first hand.”

“ I only hope that I have neither deranged nor put you to any inconvenience, Sir, by this early appointment,” rejoined the Duke; “ my anxiety to hear the existence of Mr. Harcourt confirmed, is the only excuse I can alledge for not having requested you
would

would fix your own hour to communicate the pleasing intelligence."

George was astonished—to find the Duke of Durham thus interested in his fate was really wonderful!—yet reflecting that his anxiety might still originate in his wish to relieve the mind of the worthy Principal, he could only give him credit for a very feeling heart. He entreated his Grace would make no apologies for what did him so much honour; he was very ready to satisfy him in every respect, as far as lay in his power, respecting Mr. Harcourt; yet hoped the Duke would not deem him impertinent if he previously requested he would favour him with the motives that induced him to make so public an enquiry concerning him. The Duke replied—

"As I must suppose you an intimate friend of the young man in question, I commend your prudence, Sir;—believe me, I took every method to discover him before I had recourse to the public papers, and was

able to trace him to his being upon the point of marriage with a very rich widow in Martinico, La Baronne de Valcarné.—

What became of him from the moment he was supposed to have been forced from that Island, I have hitherto been unable to learn ; and the last mentioned information I obtained from Principal Douglas, to whom I sent Mr. Oswald to make enquiries concerning this youth ;—though, to be honest, I did not allow him to mention my name to my worthy relation, nor to inform him why I was thus curious concerning his *protégée*.—I hope my, perhaps ill-timed, cautious reserve did not induce him to deceive me ?”

“ The Principal is incapable of deceit, your Grace,” replied George, animated in the defence of his friend ; “ excuse my warmth, but were you acquainted with one-tenth part of my obligations to that excellent man, you would conceive how strongly I am attached to him. But to relieve you from every suspense respecting his much-favoured *protégée*, and to convince you that
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the Principal gave all the information in his power, allow me to introduce myself to your notice as the George Harcourt you have hitherto fought in vain, who is ready to answer any question it may concern you to have resolved."

The Duke started upon his legs, exclaiming—

"My eyes did not deceive me!—I traced a strong resemblance of your mother in your features before you made yourself known.—My dear and long fought nephew, come to the arms of an uncle eager to welcome you to England, and to deliver up the fortune your grandfather left, as a small reparation for his past unkindness!"

Lost in wonder and amaze, George passively received the almost paternal embrace of his noble uncle, who, smiling at the incredulous expression of his countenance, said—

“ You hardly seem to credit my assertion, my dear fellow ; but I mean to convince you that you are a Douglas, my nephew, and grandson to the late Duke of Durham, my only brother ! ”

“ Your Grace’s kindness is calculated to make me believe still greater improbabilities,” replied the grateful Harcourt ; “ yet I can hardly think myself awake ;—nor dare I flatter myself that I am your nephew ! ”

“ I mean to prove that beyond a doubt, my dear George, even before I hear how you came to be in England :—Your mother was the only daughter of my late brother, who took her with him to Florence when he went abroad for the recovery of his health ; there she saw your father, and I need not tell you what was the result of their repeated interviews. My brother, I am sorry to say, was the proudest and most inflexible of men ; he made a vow never more either to see or forgive his unfortunate daughter. The name of Harcourt, though your father was a lineal descendant of the Earls of Dumbarton, and
though

though your grandfather was one of the first Lairds of that numerous clan, was particularly obnoxious to him ; because your grandmother was a Douglas, and our family thought themselves disgraced by your grandfather's espousing the Pretender's claim—Peace be to the ashes of all the unfortunate victims who bled through their mistaken zeal in a wrong cause ! say I.—However, the Duke even endeavoured to forget that he had ever been a father, and immediately returned to England, where he almost directly married again, but had no issue by his second wife, who preceded him to the grave. In vain I enquired after my hapless niece—all he ever chose to tell me was, that she had married the descendant of a family he abhorred ; and requested that I would never more recal to his memory a daughter who had forfeited all claim to his paternal care and affection !—She had, he observed, prudently laid by her title ; therefore he hoped very few of his friends would know how much she had dishonoured him and her family.—

Knowing it was in vain to attempt to argue against his fixed determination, and fearful that I should rather injure than serve the cause I wished to support, I dropped the subject; and, some years afterwards, he informed me that she was no more: he presumed her proud spirit could ill brook the alteration in her life and circumstances that had followed her imprudent marriage.— Seriously hurt at his want of feeling, I spoke my sentiments pretty freely, so much so that a serious quarrel ensued, and we continued at variance till a short time previous to his dissolution; he then held out the olive-branch, and I readily agreed to consign the past to oblivion, particularly as I found him inclined to do you justice. In right of your mother, you were heir to a considerable part of his landed property, which came into the family by his marriage to an heiress of the illustrious House of Northington; in addition to which he has left you all his personal effects, and an estate in Gloucestershire which he purchased a few years since. He has
also

also enjoined you to assume the name of Douglas—a request (as you are not only the heir to my fortune, but also to my title) I shall particularly enforce, though I can't suppose you have any objection to comply with the will of the deceased?—Your looks have answered my question.—So to conclude my story—I can only say, from the moment of his demise, I have been indefatigable in my enquiries concerning you.—I first sent Mr. Oswald, to Rome in search of you; there he was informed that your father had left you under the care of a brother artist of the name of Mackenzie, whom he traced to England; that gentleman, however, chose to disclaim all knowledge of you, but was kind enough to refer Oswald to my good old relation Principal Douglas; who accounted in the most satisfactory manner for Mackenzie's conduct, and bestowed just encomiums upon his deserted orphan favourite, as he termed you.—I can't express the sorrow I felt when I learned the mystery which hung over your fate; in consequence of

which I had recourse to the method which has thus at last, to my infinite joy, introduced us to each other. Now, my dear George, having I trust convinced you that you are a Douglas, and heir to a Dukedom, do me the favour to give me a short account of your adventures since you left Martinico."

"Most readily, my kind uncle," replied the overjoyed Harcourt, or rather, as we shall in future style him, Douglas; for was it in nature that a young man of one-and-twenty, of a very proud and very independent spirit, and of a very lively disposition, should learn that he was a descendant from some of the first families in Great Britain, and heir to a Dukedom, without being elated by the sudden transition he experienced?

Mr. Oswald having mutually congratulated both uncle and nephew, and declared, like the former, he had instantly discerned the strong likeness Mr. Harcourt bore his mother (though he had never seen that Lady, nor

nor once looked at the pictures that led the Duke to make the discovery), rose to take his leave, properly conceiving his company could be dispensed with, and received orders to have his accounts ready for Mr. Harcourt's inspection, in the course of a few days; when the Duke said—

“ I mean, my dear fellow, to put you in immediate possession of the fortune I have hitherto held in trust for you;—we will, therefore, talk of money matters at our leisure.”

The Solicitor once more bowed, and left the room; and George immediately entered into those details concerning himself, which the reader is already acquainted with; he spoke of Elton in the most grateful terms, and protested that he should ever look upon him as his grandfather.

The Duke, who was the exact reverse of his deceased brother, commended the idea;

and remembered George's grandmother having married a merchant of that name.

“ But such a step,” said he, “ was ill calculated to conciliate the already offended Douglas's ;—however, it never occurred to me that worthy man was likely to assist me in my researches for his wife's grandchild.—I shall be very happy to claim a relationship to him ; we are both infinitely indebted to that sacred regard for his word, which induced him to set on foot so general an enquiry concerning you all over Europe, we may say.—To Principal Douglas I shall write my thanks, and endeavour to persuade him to seek an asylum in England.—As for the Mackenzies, they are unworthy our notice, and are sufficiently punished, admitting they have defrauded you, as they think with impunity and unsuspected ; for the continual dread they must entertain of being called to an account will effectually prevent them from enjoying their ill-gotten riches.

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I have heard of the pretty freak Lord John Villars played their eldest son, who bears an excellent character; and your generous behaviour to him at Lausanne was infinitely enhanced, in my opinion, by his parent's former ill-treatment of you: though God forbid, in his or any case, the innocent should suffer for the guilty.—Your amiable Madame de Valcerné seems, if one may use a very common expression, to have been too good for this world!—we can only regret she has so soon joined her kindred angels!—What sort of a girl is her daughter?”

“An amiable, lively, unaffected, little French brunette of sixteen, under a most unfortunate predicament, in my opinion; for I am so unacquainted with English manners and customs, and so very unfit for the charge her mother imposed upon me, that I positively am at a great loss what to do with her; but for the Revolution, I would have taken her to Paris, for she is very dissatisfied with her present situation.”

“ I

“ I conceive your real *embarras*, my dear fellow ; suppose you consign your ward over to me ? ”

George hastily interrupted his Grace, assuring him that he would do him a very great favour if he would take the charge of the young lady. Then, as it grew late, said he was afraid he should keep Mr. Elton waiting supper.

“ I won't ask you to prolong your visit ; you owe that good man every mark of respect ;—but I trust he will not be averse to your taking up your abode with me for the future.—My house is very large ; you may see your own company, and keep your own hours ;—when not better engaged, I shall expect you will devote a little of your time to me. But don't fancy I imagine you are to lead a hermit's life in the centre of dissipation ;—we will settle our plans to-morrow.—Present my compliments to your
grand-

grandfather, and tell him that I invite myself to breakfast in Great George Street."

Few commissions would have been more agreeable to the young man, who had hardly time to revolve the strange alteration which had taken place in his prospects, before he found himself in Elton's presence; and anxious to unburthen his mind, immediately entered upon his story.

The old man was less surprised than he expected; as he said a vague report had reached him at the time, from the British Consul at Leghorn, that his father had married a Nobleman's daughter.

"But finding you so totally ignorant of your mother's family, my dear George, I did not chuse to mention the circumstance; you seemed so totally neglected by your maternal relations, though I was bent upon making some minute enquiries concerning them.—Need I say I am truly happy you are thus honourably

honourably acknowledged by one of the best men our Peerage can boast?—to whom your grandmother was not only indebted for the little countenance her own family shewed her after she became a widow, but also for her support, though she stood in a very distant degree of relationship to that branch of the Douglas's; and both his father and brother were exasperated beyond measure with the unfortunate young widow, because her husband differed from themselves in his political opinions. Little did they then foresee that a grandchild of her's would succeed to their boasted honours—May they sit easy on your brow, my beloved child! and may the future Duke of Durham be still more eminent for his virtues than the present!—But for our meeting;—you know, my dear fellow, I meant to have wintered in Italy; and since you are so happily restored to an uncle, who will introduce you to the circle you were born to grace, I believe I shall take a trip to Lisbon for the ensuing four months. Our fogs do not suit my
lungs;

lungs ; and though I am of little use in the world, like many other people, I am loth to leave it ; and in Portugal I shall not want English society. Besides, I mean to request you would enter into a correspondence with me ;—my letters will not afford you much amusement, but your's will prove a never-failing source of entertainment to me, and cheer many a lonely hour."

George expressed his real regret that his grandfather found such a journey necessary ; and could he have done it with propriety, and consistent with the respect he owed the Duke of Durham, would willingly have accompanied him. As it was, he promised to correspond with him, and to see him as far as Falmouth on his way ; and declared himself truly sorry that he had risked a premature return to England, before his health was thoroughly re-established, merely to oblige him.

Elton

Elton assured him that his intended voyage was more the result of precaution than necessity, and had he been out of the question he should equally have found it expedient to visit England for a short time; then desiring him to recollect they were to have company to breakfast, advised their retiring, as it had long since ceased to be night.

END OF VOL. I.

